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ANON.



*The Laurel and Gold Series*

THE  
BOOK OF  
LEGENDS

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# THE BIG BIRD DAN

SIR GEORGE DASENT

IN ancient times a certain king had twelve daughters whom he loved so much that he could not endure letting them out of his sight; but every day at noon, while the king slept, the twelve princesses seized the opportunity of going for a walk.

At last it fell out that while the king was enjoying his noontide rest, and the princesses were out walking, they disappeared, and never returned home. This caused great sorrow and mourning throughout the land, but the most sorely stricken was the king.

He despatched messengers throughout the length and breadth of his own and other countries, gave out his daughters' names in all the churches, and had the bells tolled for them in every steeple, but the princesses had completely vanished, and none could tell what had become of them. The natural conclusion was that they had been spirited away by witchcraft.

## 8. THE BOOK OF LEGENDS

The news spread throughout town and countryside, into far-distant regions, and was not long in reaching the ears of a king who had twelve sons. When these princes heard of the disappearance of the king's twelve daughters, they requested permission from their father to seek them. They had much difficulty in gaining his consent, as he feared he should never see them again. However, they all fell down on their knees and begged so long, that finally he could no longer withstand them.

The king had a ship fitted out for his sons, and gave them Ritter Red, who was an experienced seaman, for a captain. They sailed for a long time, landed on every shore they discovered and sought for the princesses, making inquiries everywhere, but could obtain no tidings regarding them.

Only a few days were wanting to complete the seven years since the princes had set sail, when a great storm arose and raged with such fury that they hardly expected ever to reach land again. All on board were compelled to work hard, and no one had a wink of sleep while the storm lasted. When the third day was nearly over, the wind fell, and everything became as still as possible. Ex-

hausted with toil and the rough weather, the whole crew were asleep in a twinkling, all save the youngest prince, who could not rest, and was unable to close an eye.

While the prince was pacing up and down the deck, the ship came to a small island, and a little dog ran down to the shore, barking and baying as though it wished to come on board. The prince, going to that side of the deck, endeavoured to coax the dog, whistling and calling to it, but the more he whistled and coaxed, the more the little animal barked and snarled.

It seemed a pity that the animal should starve on the island, for the prince felt certain it must have come from some ship which had been cast away in the storm; but he felt at a loss to know how to help it. He could not launch a boat by himself, neither could he wake his weary comrades for the sake of a dog. Finally, seeing the weather so calm and still, he said to himself, "Come what may, I will go ashore and save that dog." Then he began to lower the boat, which proved an easier task than he had anticipated.

He rowed ashore and advanced to the dog, but directly he attempted to catch it, the animal jumped on one side. The prince

pursued it, and the dog ran away again ; and this manœuvre was repeated until, without realising he had journeyed so far, the prince found himself inside a splendid castle. Immediately the dog became a lovely princess, and, sitting on a bench, the prince beheld a man so huge and hideous that he almost lost his wits in consternation.

"You have no need to be afraid," said the man; but, truth to tell, his gruff voice only served to increase the prince's agitation. "I know full well what you desire. There are twelve of you, and you are in quest of the twelve missing princesses. I know too where they are. They are prisoners to my lord and master; in his hall they sit, each on her chair, and comb his hair, for he has twelve heads.

"Already you have sailed seven years, but you must sail seven more before you find them. As for yourself, you might stay here and welcome, and marry my daughter; but first you must slay the king, who is a hard master to all of us, and we are weary of him. When he is dead, I shall be king in his stead."

The Troll gave the king's son a magic sword and a flask, upon drinking from which he gained strength to wield the sword.

"When you return to the ship," said the Troll, "conceal the sword in your berth that Ritter Red may not see it. He is not man enough to use it, but he will become jealous, and will seek your life.

"When seven years are over, all but three days, everything will happen again as it happened but now; stormy weather will overtake you, with a great tempest, and when the hurricane has passed you will be sleepy. Take your sword and row ashore. You will come to a castle guarded by all kinds of fierce animals—wolves, bears, and lions; but do not be afraid; they will all come and crouch at your feet.

"Inside the castle you will find the Troll; he sits in a splendid chamber in magnificent array. Twelve heads he has, and the princesses sit around him, each in her chair, combing his heads, and you can imagine they do not like their task. Waste no time, but hew off one head after another as quickly as you can; for if the giant discovers you he will swallow you alive."

The king's son, returning to the ship with his enchanted sword, found all the others still fast asleep and snoring. Bearing in mind the warning he had received, he hid the sword in

his berth, so that neither Ritter Red nor any of the others suspected it was there.

Scarcely had he done so, than it began to blow, and he awoke the others, protesting they ought not to sleep any longer when there was such a splendid wind; and none of them marked that he had been absent.

Seven years passed, all but three days, and it happened as the Troll had said. A terrific storm arose, and when it had blown itself out, all on board became sleepy and lay down to rest, all save the king's youngest son, who rowed ashore and discovered the castle.

The guards fell at his feet, as the Troll had predicted, and when he reached the chamber there sat the king fast asleep, with the twelve princesses sitting each in her chair and combing one of his heads. The king's son beckoned to them to get out of the way. They pointed to the Troll, making signs to him to escape as fast as possible; but he kept on making signs in return, until they understood that he intended to set them free. Then they stole away softly, one after the other, and, as they went, he hewed off the Troll king's heads, until the blood gushed out like a great brook.

Having slain the Troll, the prince rowed once more to the ship and hid the sword. He could not get rid of the body by himself, and since he had done so much, he thought it only fair that the others should give him some assistance. He roused them all, saying it was a shame they should lie snoring when he had discovered the princesses, and set them free from the Troll.

At this announcement they only laughed, asserting that he had been as fast asleep as they, and had only dreamed that he was man enough to perform such a deed. Were any one capable of freeing the princesses, they declared it was far more likely to be one of themselves.

But the king's youngest son persisted, and informed his brothers of the whole story. Finally, they were persuaded to follow him to the island, and when they saw the brook of blood, and then the castle, the decapitated Troll, his twelve heads, and the princesses, they recognised that he had spoken only truth, and joyfully assisted in throwing the body and heads into the sea.

All was now gladness and merriment, but none was happier than the princesses, who were no longer compelled to sit and comb the



Troll's hair all the day. Of the gold and silver and precious stones that the castle contained, they took as much as the ship would hold, and then they all embarked.

When they had sailed for some distance, the princesses discovered that in their joy they had forgotten to take with them their gold crowns, which lay in a chest in the castle. None of the others seeming willing to return, the king's youngest son said, "I have already dared so much, that I can quite well fetch the gold crowns, if only you will strike sail and wait until I return."

This his brothers promised to do, but when he had rowed so far that they could no longer see him, Ritter Red interfered. It was his ambition to become the chief, and marry the youngest princess. He declared it was no use waiting for the prince, since they knew he would never come back, and he reminded them that the king had given him all authority to sail or not as he chose.

The princes durst not oppose Ritter Red, who, when they had sailed away, threatened to slay any who should assert that it was not he, Ritter Red, and none other, who had saved the princesses.

Meanwhile the king's youngest son rowed

to land, went to the castle, and found the chest containing the gold crowns. Taking it up bodily, he carried it down to the boat and pushed off, but, having rowed to the spot whence he ought to have seen the ship, lo and behold it was gone. When he found that he could not catch a glimpse of it anywhere, he quickly divined how matters stood. To row after the ship would have been unavailing, so he was forced to return to the island.

He was somewhat daunted at the prospect of having to spend the night in the castle; but there was no other house in the island, so, plucking up heart, he fastened all the gates and doors, and lay down in a room where there was a bed ready made. He passed a restless and anxious night, and his alarm increased towards morning when he heard a creaking and groaning and rumbling in wall and roof, as though the whole castle were being torn asunder.

Then, suddenly, something plunged down by the side of his bed, with a sound as though a whole cart-load of hay were falling. All became still again; but after a while the prince heard a voice which bade him not be afraid, saying:

"Here am I, the Big Bird Dan,  
Come to help you all I can.

"The first thing you must do in the morning," the voice continued, "is to go to the barn and fetch four barrels of rye for me. I must fill my crop with them for breakfast, else I cannot do anything."

After this the prince fell tranquilly asleep, but when he awoke he perceived by the bedside a bird of monstrous size which had a feather growing at the nape of its neck, as thick and long as a half-grown spruce fir.

The king's son went to the barn to fetch four barrels of rye, and the bird, after cramming them into his crop, told him to hang the chest with the gold crowns on one side of his neck. Then he had to collect as much gold and silver as would balance the chest on the other side, after which the bird bade him get on his back and hold fast on to the feather growing on the nape of his neck.

Away they went with the wind whistling after them, and in a short time had overtaken the ship. The king's son wished to go on board and fetch the enchanted sword, since,

the Troll had charged him not to let it be seen by any one; but the bird decided this was impossible.

"Never fear," he said, "Kitter Red will not see it; but were you to go on board now, he would take your life. He has set his heart upon marrying the youngest princess; but set your mind at ease, she will not accept him, and carries about with her a naked sword, lest he should approach her."

After a prolonged flight, they reached the island ruled over by the Troll, who received the king's son with much hospitality. He could not show him enough gratitude for having slain his lord and master, thus making him king of the Trolls. Had the prince been willing, he might have had the Troll king's daughter and half the kingdom, but his heart was still set on the youngest princess.

He could not rest, and wanted to lose no time in following the ship. The Troll king begged him to have patience, saying they had nearly seven years yet to sail before they could reach home. The Bird said the same, and the Troll king added, "If you are afraid for their safety, you can go on board when they sail by this island, and see them for yourself. You can fetch the sword too, and

return it to me, for you will have no further need of it."

When the king's son went on board the ship it was night, and all were sleeping, princes and princesses in their cabins, and by the youngest princess's side lay the sword which she used during the day to repel Ritter Red's advances. The prince removed the Troll's magic sword and rowed ashore, none on board having any suspicion that he had been there. Still the king's son had no rest, and was continually longing to set out again.

Finally, when it came near the end of the seven years, the Troll king said, "Now you may prepare for going, since you cannot be persuaded to stay with us. I will lend you my iron boat, which sails of itself, if you say, 'Boat, boat, go on!' In the boat lies an iron club, which you must raise slightly when you see the ship straight ahead; then they will have such a fair breeze that they will forget to look at you.

"When you come alongside, raise the club again, and such a storm will arise, that they will be too busily occupied to notice you. When you have run past, raise the club for the third time but be careful always to lay

it down again, else there will be such a storm that both you and they will be wrecked.

"When you reach land, do not trouble about the boat; turn it round and give it a push, saying, 'Boat, boat, go back home!'"

Before the prince set sail the Troll and his daughter bestowed upon him so much gold and silver, and so many costly treasures, with clothes and linen that the princess had sewn and woven for him, that he was far richer than any of his brothers.

No sooner had he taken his place in the boat and said, "Boat, boat, go on!" than away the boat went, and soon he perceived the ship right ahead. The prince raised the club, and such a fair wind arose that those on board never thought of looking at him.

When he came alongside and raised the club once more, a storm arose with such tempestuous weather that the white foam flew about the ship, and the billows rolled across the deck, giving the sailors such hard work that they had no time to notice him. On passing the ship he raised the club for the third time, and the storm increased to such an extent that the sailors had still less leisure to look around, and no one observed the prince.

He reached land long before the ship arrived, and, after unloading the boat, turned it about and pushed it from the shore, saying, "Boat, boat, go home!" and away it sped.

Then the prince disguised himself as a sailor—whether by the Troll king's instruction or his own notion none ever knew—and went to a miserable hut where an old woman lived.

This old dame he persuaded that he was a poor sailor, the only survivor from a large vessel that had been wrecked, and he begged her to afford house-room for himself and the few possessions he had saved.

"Heaven mend me!" cried the old wife, "how can I lend any one house-room! Look at me and mine; why, I have no bed to sleep in myself, still less for any one else to lie on."

The sailor declared it was of no consequence if only he could have a roof over his head he did not care where he slept. When he expressed so much satisfaction, the old dame felt she could not turn him out, and this having been settled, he went in the afternoon to fetch his belongings from the shore.

Meanwhile the old woman, thinking that

here must be something with which to entertain her friends, began questioning him as to who he was, whence he came, whither he was bound, what was in the chests and bales he was bringing up, what his business was, and whether he had heard anything of the twelve princesses who had been lost for more years than any one could remember.

To all these and innumerable other questions the prince replied that he was so poorly and had such a headache after the terrible hurricane that he was not equal to the exertion of talking. If she would give him a few days in which to recover from his fatigues, he told her she should know all she desired.

The very next day the old woman renewed her questions, but the sailor's headache was still so severe that he could not answer, although he managed to drop a few hints that he did know something concerning the princesses.

This was enough for the good dame; away she ran to all the gossips and chatterboxes of the neighbourhood, and soon the cottage was besieged by busybodies inquiring about the princesses. "Had the sailor seen them?" they asked. "Would they soon be there? Were



they on the way?" and much more of the same description.

Still the sailor continued groaning over the terrible headache from which he had been suffering since the storm, but he gave them to understand that unless the princesses had been shipwrecked they ought to make the land in about a fortnight's time; that was to say supposing they were still alive, for although he, the sailor, had seen them, it was quite possible they had since been cast away in the hurricane.

Immediately one of these gossips sped off to the palace with the story, announcing that in the hut of a certain old wife, down on the shore, there lodged a sailor who had seen the princesses, and said they were coming home in a fortnight's time. When the king heard this tale he despatched a messenger to the sailor commanding him to come to the palace and relate the news himself.

"I don't see how I am to go," said the prince, "for I haven't any clothes fit to stand in before the king."

The king insisted that he should come, richly or poorly clad; his Majesty must and would converse with him, for there was no one else who could bring him tidings of his

daughters. At last the sailor went to the palace, and was taken before the king, who asked him if it was true that he had seen the princesses.

"Aye, aye, your Majesty," replied the prince "I've seen them sure enough; but I don't know whether they are still alive, for when last I saw them, the weather was so foul that we in our ship were cast away; but if they are still alive they will arrive safely in a fortnight or perhaps sooner."

At this the king was almost beside himself for joy. When the expected time came, he drove down to the strand in great state to receive the princesses; and there was joy throughout the whole land when the ship came sailing in with the princes and princesses and Ritter Red.

None was more delighted than the old king, who had got his daughters back again. The eleven elder princesses too were glad and merry, but the youngest, forced to marry Ritter Red, still remained sad and sorrowful.

Her demeanour annoyed the king. He asked her why she was not merry and cheerful like the others, for there was nothing to trouble her now that she had escaped from the clutches of the Troll, and was going to marry

such a husband as Ritter Red, who had set her and her sisters free. The unfortunate princess durst make no reply, as Ritter Red had threatened the life of any one who should betray him.

One day, while the twelve princesses were hard at work sewing and stitching the bridal array, there entered a man in a sailor's cloak with a pedlar's pack on his back. He asked the ladies if they would not buy something from him as he had a number of wares and costly things, both in gold and in silver.

The princesses looked at his wares and then at the pedlar, fancying they had seen both him and some of his goods before.

"He who has so many fine things," said the youngest princess, "must surely have something even more precious, which suits us better than these."

"Maybe I have," answered the pedlar, at which all the others cried, "Hush!" bidding the princess remember what Ritter Red had threatened to do.

Some days after this the princesses sat looking out of the window, when the king's son came again with the sea-cloak thrown about him and the chest with the gold crowns at his back. When he entered the palace hall he

unlocked the chest before the princesses, and each recognised her own crown.

Then the youngest princess exclaimed, "I think it only right that he who set us free should have the meed that is his due; and that man is not Ritter Red, but he who has brought to us our golden crowns."

The king's son, casting off the sailor's cloak, stood there far grander and finer than all the rest; and the old king had Ritter Red condemned to death.

Each prince took his own bride, and there were tremendous rejoicings in the palace. The wedding which followed was celebrated with such regal magnificence that its fame was noised abroad throughout twelve kingdoms.

# MADGE FIGGEY AND THE PIG

CECILY M. RUTLEY

THE Cornish people of long ago believed in witches and wizards, as well as in the more friendly and pleasant sort of fairy folk. This is a tale about one of them.

In St. Leven there once lived an old woman. Madge Figgey was her name, and after a while she moved to Burian. Now at Burian a man named Tom Trenoweth lived near to her, and Tom had a very fine pig.

Whenever old Madge passed Tom's house and saw his pig, she was filled with a great desire. "I want that fine pig for my own!" said she.

One day Madge said to Tom, "I'll give you five shillings, Tom, for your pig."

"Thank you," replied Tom, with a laugh. "My pig is worth four times as much as that. But I am not selling her at all."

"Oh, very well," said old Madge. "Just as you please. But mark my words, Tom

Trenoweth, you will soon be wishing that you *had* sold her to me!"

"I wonder what she means " said Tom, as the old dame went off, nodding her head and shaking her finger at him.

Tom soon found out. For from that day his pig began to grow thin. It did not matter how much food he gave her to eat, nor how good it was. Each day she was thinner than she had been the day before. "Madge Figgey is a witch!" said Tom.

One day old Madge Figgey came to visit Tom again. "Will you sell me that pig of yours now " asked she.

"I will not!" shouted Tom. "And begone from my house, Madge Figgey! You're a witch and have cast your wicked spells on my poor pig. Just take them off at once."

"Ah!" said old Madge. "Before another week is over you'll be wishing you had sold me your pig, Tom." Then away she went again, chuckling in wicked glee.

All that week Tom's pig grew thinner and thinner still, until at the end of it she was nothing but skin and bone. "Yet she has eaten enough for three pigs all the week!" cried Tom. "Madge Figgey is a wicked, *wicked* old witch!"

"It's no good keeping that pig any longer," said Tom at last. "I'll take her to Penzance market, and sell her for what I can get."

When the pig was taken out into the road she was so weak she could hardly stand. Then all of a sudden she set off running as fast as ever she could go. Tom was so surprised that he almost let go of the rope he had tied round one of her legs. He had very nearly not put a rope on her at all. "For *she'll* never be able to run away!" he had said.

Across the fields, over hedges and ditches went the pig, with Tom after her. At last he could not keep hold of the rope any longer, nor run any farther, he was so out of breath. "You must go where you wish now," he said, and let go of the rope.

Then the pig suddenly stopped running, and walked along as quietly as a lamb. But she would only go the way she wished, and Tom had to go that way, too.

At last Tom and his pig came on to Tregenebris Downs, and when they reached the spot where the road divided into two, one going to Sancreed, the other to Penzance, Tom took hold of the rope again. "You shall go to Penzance, my pig!" he said.

But no sooner was the end of the rope in

Tom's hands again than the pig began to race away once more. She jerked the rope out of his hands, and away she went as fast as she could go to Tregenebris Bridge.

Now Tregenebris Bridge was of the kind that was known as a bolt. It was like a long pipe or drain, and the pig ran into the hollow part beneath the bridge. But the bridge was very narrow in the middle, and here the poor pig stuck. She could not run forward, she could not get back.

When Tom came up to the bridge he heard his piggy grunting, and he stooped down and looked in beneath it. "Here's a nice to-do!" he cried. "Serves you right, Mrs. Pig, for running away. Now, how I am going to get you out *I* don't know."

Tom tried every way he could think of, but nothing could move the pig. So he sat down on the grass, and waited for something to happen. But nothing did. Tom sat there all day, getting hungrier and hungrier and hungrier. For he had had his breakfast at five in the morning, and had brought nothing with him to eat upon the way.

At last, when the sun was beginning to set, Tom jumped up. "It's no use my waiting here any longer!" he cried. "I'm nearly



starving as it is. I shall leave the pig here, and go home."

Tom was just turning away from the bridge when he saw old Madge Figgey tramping along with a basket in one hand, and a stick in the other.

"Good-evening to you, Tom Trenoweth!" said she. "Whatever are you doing here at this time of the day?"

"If you take a look under the bridge you may find out," replied Tom.

"Why!" exclaimed Madge. "I hear your pig grunting, I do declare. What will you sell her to me for now, Tom?"

"If you can get her out of the bridge you may have her for nothing," said Tom. "She won't come out for me. Have you anything to eat in your basket, by the way?"

Old Madge Figgey opened her basket, and took out a loaf of bread which she tossed to Tom. "Thank you!" cried Tom, taking a big bite. "I *am* hungry. I've had nothing to eat all day!"

"Piggy, piggy, piggy! Come out! Come out!" cried old Madge, stooping down and looking in under the bridge.

And what do you think? The pig came out at once, and as easily as could be! Then

old Madge turned round and started for home, and the pig trotted after her.

"Good-evening, Tom," cried Madge, winking her eye at him. "So I have your fine pig at last! What a lot of trouble you have given yourself and me and her."

"Oh, yes! *You* have her!" cried Tom, and this time it was he who shook his fists at Madge. "You have her all right. You are a *witch*!"

"Perhaps I am, Tom. Perhaps I am!" mumbled old Madge Figgey, as she tramped away out of sight with the pig following at her heels, just like a dog. "There are times when it is particularly useful to be a witch."

"There are, indeed!" cried Tom. "I hope I may *never* look upon your old face again."

But I expect Tom saw old Madge many times after that, and his pig as well, for they lived so near to him. The story does not say, but I expect, too, the pig soon grew plump and fat again, for Madge Figgey would no longer cast evil charms upon her now that the pig was her very own.

# THE LEGEND OF BEDDGELERT

HILDA A. E. ROBERTS

**B**EDDGELERT lies near the mighty Snowdon in Carnarvonshire, about eight miles inland from the sea. "Bedd" is the Welsh word for "grave," so Beddgelert means the "Grave of Gelert." This is the story of how it came to be so called.

Many years ago there lived a brave chieftain, called Llewellyn, in Snowdonia. Now Llewellyn had a faithful hound which had been presented to him by King John of England, and this hound was the leader of all Llewellyn's pack. At home he was as gentle as a lamb but in the hunt there was not another to compare with him.

One day when Llewellyn and his men had assembled on the mountain-side ready for hunting the hare, the huntsman blew a loud blast on his horn to rally the pack of hounds. To the huntsman's surprise, Gelert, the leader of the pack, was not there. So he blew again upon his horn. Still Gelert did not come.

"It seems very strange that Gelert does not come in answer to my call," said the huntsman.

But they could not wait for him any longer and the huntsmen and the rest of the pack went on without him.

But somehow or other things went wrong that day. The chase was poor, the hounds failed to run their quarry to earth.

At twilight Llewellyn rode sadly towards his castle. He was wondering greatly where Gelert had been all day. Just then he heard the familiar sound of his barking.

"Ah! Bad dog! Why did you fail me to-day? Where have you been?" Llewellyn began. But as he rode nearer he could see that something was amiss.

The dog did not bound forward to greet him as he usually did. He crouched low and licked his lips. Then, looking more closely at him, Llewellyn perceived that Gelert's coat was tangled and matted with clots of blood.

"What is the matter? Whence came all this blood?" cried his master.

Here, there and everywhere the ground was smeared with it. Llewellyn dismounted hastily and ran into the castle. Here there

were signs everywhere of a struggle. Blood, freshly-spilled, lay all over the floor. No servants were there to answer to his call. Gelert followed at his master's heels, dragging his hind legs somewhat

Quickly Llewellyn's gaze travelled to the cradle in which he had left his baby son. He rushed up to it. The baby was not there! The coverlet was torn and smeared with blood. All was in disorder. Llewellyn had only one thought at the time. "Cruel monster!" he cried to the dog. "Thou hast betrayed thy trust and devoured my son!"

The poor dumb creature's eyes searched his master's face.

"If only I could speak!" he seemed to say. He crouched low and tried to lick his master's feet. But Llewellyn was furious.

"Thou, too, shalt die, treacherous hound!" And so saying he plunged his sword into Gelert's side.

His dying yelp was heard from afar. It woke Llewellyn's sleeping child who murmured and cried out.

The chieftain searched in the direction from whence the sound came. There, in another room, quite safe and sound, beneath a heap of blood-stained clothes, lay the child.

At his side, torn and mangled, but quite dead, lay an enormous wolf!

Now the truth was made clear to Llewellyn. The gallant hound had fought with the wolf and had killed him, in order to save the life of the child he so jealously guarded.

Llewellyn's grief was pitiful to behold. "The frantic deed which laid thee low, this heart shall ever rue," said he.

So Gelert was buried with ceremony and there beneath a mound of stones, his grave can still be seen to this day.

## THE HEATHER ALE

M. V. JACK

**H**EATHER is something more than heather in the Scottish mind. It is a symbol of the vigour and hardihood, the richness, the wild yet delicate flavour of the landscape and the race. It is the bloom on our history as well as on our hills.

And the old lost brew of the Heather Ale—honey-sweet and potent—seems not so much a drink as a distillation of enchantments. Yet a drink it was in the olden time, a drink to warm the hearts of heroes and fire the muse of the bards; wisdom of age to the young, and to the old the glory of youth. . . . Among the hills they brewed it, the vanished people—Picts or an older race—who play so large a part in our tradition. Garb them in green mantles and pointed rush hats, and they become fairies; clothe them with heroic stature and lo! they are the hunters of the Fein. They have even passed into our idiom under the quaint name of Hottentots!

. . . They lived in green mounds and subterranean dwellings, and there they drank the liquor of the heather-bell. How well they kept the secret of their brewing is told in the following legend of Galloway.

The little swarthy folk had had their day. Ruthlessly the tall, fair strangers drove them back into crevice and cranny, into caves and holes in the rock; relentlessly they crushed the old rude civilisation with its strange outlandish ways and—here and there—its jewels of barbaric achievement.

At last there was a great conflict between them. Back and forth went the tide of battle until the little people were completely wiped out. So at least thought the King of the Scots, as he rode proudly over the battlefield. He was glad that the barbarians would trouble him no more with their teasing, cunning warfare. One thing only he regretted—that before he had stamped them out utterly he had not learnt the secret of the Heather Ale.

Rich old wines they drank at the Scottish court; good strong ale; but none had the charm, the potency of the Pictish beverage. Strange ecstasies, they said, fell upon those who drank it; cold and hunger were forgotten; on a raging winter night they could



see the heather-blush on far blue island hills, and listen to the drone of bees over miles of knee-high, honey-scented heather.

"Fool that I was!" the king muttered impatiently.

At that moment two dwarfish figures started up from under his horse's feet and leapt into the flaming gorse bushes.

"After them!" cried the king; and presently they were brought back, bound, resentful, darting quick, sullen glances from under their bushy brows.

Father and son they were, last of all the hill folk; broad and muscular despite their little stature; dark, primitive and rude.

The Scottish king sat proudly on his horse, a fine upstanding figure, fair of face and nobly featured, stern and imperious, every inch a king. He looked on the captives as he might look on some repulsive animals. There was but one thing he wanted of them.

"Dogs!" he said, "I will spare your lives on one condition—that you reveal to me the secret of the Heather Ale! To the cliff!"

They rode a little distance to the brink of a cliff. Far below the waves fretted among the cruel rocks. The little men shrank back appalled.

"Now," said the king, "I give you but a short time to choose which you will do—surrender the secret and spare your lives, or—suffer torture and perish over yonder!"

The younger of the two tossed back his matted hair, clenched his teeth and strained at his bonds, but the elder crept to the king's side, crafty cunning in his eyes.

"Sire," he said, and his speech was rough and uncouth as his appearance; "give me but a chance to speak with you apart!"

The king looked down on him with loathing, but he rode a few paces away from the cliff edge. The little man drew closer to his side.

"Sire," he said again. "I am old and my life has grown dear to me! Yet I fear my son would kill me if I should tell you the secret we have sworn to keep. But if you will throw my son over the cliff first, then, sire, then——"

The king looked at him with greater loathing than ever, but he ordered his men to throw the lad over the cliff into the sea.

This was quickly done. Struggling, scratching, biting, the youth was seized and flung into the sea where the bitter waves foamed and fretted among the sharp rocks.

The king frowned and bit his lip.

"Now," he said impatiently, "the secret!"

The little, swarthy, old man was laughing! His crafty eyes glittered through his wildly tangled hair.

"Ah-a!" said he, a note of triumph in his animal speech; "you thought I sent my son to his death because I was afraid. Nay, I did but fear that he would betray our secret, for he was only a boy. Now you can do to me what you will—torture or slay, I care not; the secret of the Heather Ale will perish with me!"

The Scots king looked down on him with a queer new interest. He saw something there—be it ever so rudely expressed—something dauntless, indomitable, to which he himself was no stranger.

"I see, indeed," he said dryly, "that torture would avail little with such as thou!" He bade his followers release the barbarian, who henceforth lived quietly among the Scots until his death.

The secret of the Heather Ale he never revealed, and a secret it remains to this day.

# THE LAIDLEY WORM OF SPINDLESTON

MARGARET, TYNEDALE

“NEWS, Your Highness! A royal messenger!”

“A messenger? From my father?” asked the Princess Margaret eagerly.

It was a very lonely life that the little princess led in the royal castle of Bamburgh. Her mother was dead; her only brother, the Childe (or knight) of the Wynd, had sailed away to seek fame and fortune in other lands, and had not been heard of for so many years that she feared he was dead too. And lately the king, her father, after years of mourning, had gone forth once more among his people, and she missed him sorely.

News at last! Yes, news indeed! The king was to be wed once more, and would shortly return to Bamburgh with his bride. At once the royal city was plunged into all the bustle of preparations. Nobles and chieftains of Bernicia (as that part of Northumbria was then called) came flocking in to do homage

to their sovereign. But the fair Margaret's heart misgave her, as she gazed from her bower window, watching and waiting for the royal procession. She longed for her father's return; but what would this new stepmother be like? Could she love her too?

At length she heard the well-known horn, and from her lofty window she could see the cavalcade approaching. Calling her maidens, she descended to the great hall to welcome her sire, and to be presented to his new queen. It was with very mixed feelings that the shy little maiden stepped forward to greet the newcomer. Her beauty was marvellous to behold, and her manner outwardly kindly; but in reality her heart was as hard as stone. She had been bewitched in childhood; and with the gift of magic beauty she had received the fatal power of casting spells.

Fancy her envy on seeing that the sweet and gentle princess was attracting far more attention than she with all her arts could command. And when one young knight so completely lost his heart to the lovely Margaret that he praised her aloud in glowing terms, calling her peerless among women, the jealous queen's anger burst all bounds.

This was too much! Such a rival must be swept from her path.

So, like the witch she really was, she uttered a dreadful curse: The Princess Margaret, she said, should turn into a laidley worm (which means a loathsome serpent or dragon) and should spread terror through the land. But there was a limit to her power for evil over one who was good and pure; some loophole of escape she was bound to leave, but she made it as small as she could. On one condition could the victim be released, and that was the return of the absent brother—the Childe of the Wynd—he alone could break the spell.

Cruelly she smiled as she made this last condition—small chance was there of his ever coming back, she thought—for like many others she believed him dead.

Margaret laughed aloud at her cruel step-mother's threat. Really it was too absurd to frighten her—how could she turn into a laidley worm? She had done nothing to merit such a fate. There was no question now of loving her father's new wife, but at least she knew of one who would be ready to champion her should trouble threaten—and the thought was comforting.

And so presently she retired to her dainty bower, and fell peacefully asleep. Did she of threats and curses, of the brother she dream longed for, or of the brave young knight who had looked on her with such admiration? Perhaps. But in the morning when her maidens came to wait upon her, they fled in terror from the venomous beast which they found coiled upon the fair princess's bed. Their shrieks echoed through the castle, and even the warders shrank from the dreadful creature as she crawled down the stairs and out through the gate into the open country.

Two or three miles away, among the crags of Spindlestone, she found a cave, and here she took up her abode. But at night she came out to feed upon the neighbouring fields and gardens, and her poisonous breath scorched even what she did not eat.

“For seven miles east, and seven miles west,  
And seven miles north and south,  
No blade of grass or corn could grow,  
So venomous was her mouth.”

So runs the old ballad. In sheer despair, the king's retainers set apart seven cows for the dragon's special use, and every night took the

milk to a large stone trough near the mouth of the cave, that the Worm might quench her raging thirst.

Terror reigned; famine threatened. The tale of woe spread far and wide, till at last it reached the ears of the Childe of the Wynd, as he sat at a feast of victory. Wild with wrath, he told the dread tidings to his faithful followers. With drawn swords they one and all vowed never to rest or feast again until their beloved princess should be restored and avenged. But how to get there?

They built a stout ship with masts of rowanwood, for of such wood was made the cross on which our Redeemer suffered, and therefore no enchantment could touch it. Bravely they sailed homeward, and in seven days the look-out sighted a massive castle poised upon a mighty rock.

"That indeed is my father's keep, the castle by the sea," exclaimed the eager Childe, and would have made straight for the shore.

But the wicked queen had seen the gallant craft, and guessed its errand. Promptly she sent her imps to intercept it, but they were powerless against the rowan-tree mast, and returned baffled. Then she sent warriors to the attack, but they were mere mortals, and



the Childe and his band were more than a match for them

Then came trouble from an unexpected quarter. The Laidley Worm herself failed to recognise her deliverer, and in her fear she lashed the water with her tail until the waves grew so rough that landing was impossible. But Childe Wynd was not dismayed; quickly he changed his course, and made for Budle Bay, where he landed safely. Mounting his trusty steed, he rode to Spindleston, where the dragon had retreated. Throwing his bridle over a stone pillar (whence the place takes its name) he drew his "berry-brown" sword and went on foot to find her.

Face to face at last, she recognised her long-lost brother. In his presence her speech returned to her, and she begged him to "quit his sword, and give her kisses three"—truly a strange request! Nothing daunted, the Childe bent low his stalwart frame, and caressed the fearsome beast, which then turned tail and retreated into her cave. A moment later, who should emerge but the Princess Margaret, a beautiful maiden once more.

Quick as thought her brother pulled off his crimson cloak to wrap around that delicate form; and gathering her into his strong arms,

lifted her upon his horse. And so they returned in triumph to Bamburgh Castle, to a father's love and his subjects' joy.

But the Childe's mission was not yet completed; he had broken the wicked spell which had enslaved his beloved sister—he had still to avenge her wrongs. Where was the enemy?

“Fetch forth the miscreant witch!” he thundered. And high and low they sought her, till at last she was discovered cowering in terror in her bower, for well she knew her hour had come. Vainly she tried to pray, but the power to do so had long since deserted her, for she had sold her soul to evil.

And now she was to pay the price.

Brave and true himself, the Childe of the Wynd hated anything mean and cruel. And in no measured terms he told his unkind step-mother just what he thought of her. Before his righteous indignation she paled and trembled. The avenging prince knew something about magic arts, and when he sentenced her to the doom she had prepared for his siter, and bade her “squat, crawl, hiss, spit, in likeness of an ugly toad,” she knew there was no help for her. Hardly had he ceased speaking when the change took place—and as a toad she hissed her helpless rage, for she could

do no more harm. The warders chased her from the castle gates, but no one killed her.

“And on the lands near Ida’s towers  
A loathsome toad ~~she~~ crawls,  
And venom spits on everything  
That cometh nigh the walls.”

At length, however, she took refuge at the bottom of the castle well; and it is popularly believed that she is there yet!

And so was the wicked queen paid out for her jealousy, and the long-lost heir and his fair sister restored to their home.

Until comparatively recent times the cave and trough could still be seen at Spindlestone, but have since been destroyed by a quarry, the Spindle Stone alone remaining.

# THE MAN WHO SOUGHT THE CROCK OF GOLD

FREDERICK DUNBAR

**T**IM Jarvis was a lazy, good-for-nothing who wasted his time wandering about the village. He never did any work. He was always getting into mischief, and his wife Norah was always getting him out again.

She scolded him and teased him and pleaded with him, but he would not mend his ways. He would sit dreaming by their turf-fire all day; and at night—well, he would dream all night too, and then spend half the morning telling poor Norah of his wonderful dreams.

One night he dreamt that he found a shining crock of gold—and where do you think it was? There in his dream he saw it quite plainly glistening on the fine bridge that spans the river at Dublin.

Next morning he thought about his wonderful dream, but he did not tell Norah. He was sure that she would laugh at him—and then scold him!

That night, however, Tim dreamt again of that wonderful crock of gold, and it looked more beautiful than ever. He awoke with a start and rubbed his eyes. All he saw was the gray dawn streaming through the tiny window of the cabin. He crept out of bed and stood shivering on the cold floor. Slowly he dressed himself, thinking all the time of this wonderful crock of gold and of all he could obtain with it. Yes, his mind was made up. He would go in search of the fortune that was so surely awaiting him. So without waking his wife, Timothy took his stick, counted the few coins that jingled in his pocket, and closing the door softly behind him, set out on the road to Dublin.

High up in the sky a lark was singing. The blackbirds were whistling gaily in the hedges, and their cheery notes made him step out more briskly. "Go along, Timothy," they seemed to be telling him, "and you'll find the crock of gold."

As the sun rose higher and higher in the blue sky, Tim thought to himself what a fine world it was. "What a fine fellow I am, too," he said to himself, "setting out for Dublin to find a crock of gold. No more work in the fields for me! When I get my

fortune I'll be among the greatest in the land, and every one will be saying 'Good-morning, your honour,'” and he laughed aloud.

“Well, now, that's a pleasant sound to hear on a May morning,” said a cheery voice behind him.

Tim turned swiftly round in surprise. A donkey-cart had come along the road, driven by a funny old man with a sagging beard and a coat many times too large for him.

“It is bright as the May I am feeling this morning,” said Tim.

“I'm glad to hear that,” said the old man. “Times are very hard, and one can go a long way without hearing a hearty laugh. And where may you be going this fine morning?”

“To Dublin,” cried Tim proudly.

“Then it is a long road that lies before you. Now I wonder what you will be doing in Dublin?”

“I'm going to look for my fortune,” replied Tim.

“Ho-ho! I've had that answer from many a lad. Going to look for your fortune indeed! You won't find much in the city, my lad. There are too many people there already.

And they are all looking for their fortune. How many do you think ever find it?"

"I don't know," said Tim. "Perhaps they don't know where to look."

"Ho-ho," jeered the old man, "you know the very place, of course!"

"Of course," echoed Tim.

"And it will be there waiting for you."

"Of course," said Tim stubbornly. "I'll be coming back to-night with a crock of gold."

This was too much for the old man.

"You look a sensible fellow, not like the others."

"Others! What others?" asked Tim in alarm, for he had never thought that there might be others who knew the secret.

"Oh, many a time I've met a young fellow who thought he knew where a crock of gold was hidden. Why, thirty years ago my own brother had the same silly notion. He talked about nothing else but this wonderful fortune. Perhaps he still talks about it in the big house yonder where they put madmen like him—and you." The old man pointed his whip in the direction of a great building in the distance.

"Well, good-day, my fine fellow," he went

on, "I wish you the best of luck in your search. And if you want my donkey-cart to bring back your precious crock, remember you are welcome to it. Gee-up!"

The old man whipped up his ass and, still laughing merrily, jogged on his way, leaving Tim gazing angrily by the roadside.

"That's a wicked old man indeed," muttered Tim, "but I'll show him who is the fool."

He rested a while till the old man was out of sight, then he picked up his stick and set off again. All day he tramped without speaking to any one. To those who wished him in passing a cheery good-day, he made no reply. They might think he was a surly fellow, but at least they would not get the chance to call him a fool. And indeed he wasn't, he told himself.

Late that night, Tim limped wearily through the streets of the city. At first everything was strange to him. He felt a little frightened by the bustle and the crowds, and almost wished himself back in his little cabin again. But suddenly he caught a glimpse of the river and the splendid bridge of his dreams. The sight gave him fresh courage, and he walked briskly forward, pushing his way through the crowds. Soon



he was across the bridge; so back he came, his eyes fixed on the pavement. To and fro he went, now looking at the gutters, and sometimes even peering down into the dark waters of the river.

Alas! There was no crock of gold to be seen. To be sure, once he did think he had found it, and for a moment his heart went quickly pit-a-pat. Down in the river shone something golden and glistening. He looked again, and then laughed to himself; it was only the light from a lamp gleaming on the water.

So up and down he went again. Sometimes a passer-by would look curiously at him, but Tim never looked up from his search.

At last, cold and hungry, he leant wearily against the side of the bridge. It was nearly midnight, and no one was in sight. He rested his tired head on his arms, and gazed down at the dark river. The sight of the cold water flowing steadily under the bridge made him shiver. How he wished he was back again in his own cabin. But then Norah would be sure to laugh at him and tease him. "Oh!" he groaned. "If I could only find that treasure——"

Suddenly he felt a tug at his coat-tails.

Looking down, he saw a little man wrapped in a black coat that reached almost to the ground.

"Well, Timothy," cried the little man, "don't you know me?"

"Surely I do, sir," replied Tim, wondering that any one should know him in the big city. "At least I think I must know you, although I can't tell your name."

"Name, Timothy! Oh, my name doesn't matter. Sometimes I forget it myself. Haha! that's funny. Why! I declare I *have* forgotten it. Dear, dear! I am always forgetting things. Still, there are things I do remember." The little man gazed up into Tim's face and went on:—

"Yes, yes, I remember you and your little cabin in Lismore. What brings you so far from home?"

Timothy looked closely at the little man's face, still trying to remember where he had seen him. At any rate he thought he could trust his new friend, so he answered:—

"I've come to seek my fortune."

The stranger laughed loudly, and Tim wished he had not spoken. Every one seemed to jeer at him when he spoke about the fortune that was so surely awaiting him.

"Many a man comes here to seek his fortune," said Tim stoutly.

"True, but very few ever find it," and the stranger laughed again.

"I wish I knew if I am going to find mine," said Tim sadly. Suddenly he bent down and, seizing the little man by the hand, he whispered something in his ear.

"Ha-ha-ha," laughed the little man, "so you are seeking for a crock of gold. Well, that is very funny. Where do you think you will find it?"

"I'm told it is hidden on this very bridge on which we are standing," said Tim solemnly.

"Oh, come, Tim, who told you that?"

"Why, sir, I can't exactly tell you. I just dreamt it."

"Ha-ha-ha! Is that all, Tim? Well now, that is funny. I had a dream myself the other night and strange to say I dreamt about—well, you would never guess!"

"Not about a crock of gold?" cried Tim excitedly.

"Yes, yes. I dreamt I found a crock of gold. Let me see," the old man frowned—"it was—it was——"

"You don't mean to say you've forgotten!"

gasped Tim, holding tight to the old man's arm. He almost added "you old fool," but luckily just then the old man gave a shout.

"I've got it!" he cried, doing two steps of a jig, "I've remembered!"

"Where?"

"It has all come back to me. The crock of gold lay in Paddy Bryan's field——"

"I know it——"

"And the pit where it lay," went on the little man, "was close to a large furze bush all ablaze with yellow blossom."

Tim's eyes opened wide in wonder and delight. He knew old Paddy's field well. He was certain, too, he knew the very bush that the little man had mentioned.

"Ho-ho, I always thought there was money in that field," he said to himself. He grasped the hand of the stranger and thanked him.

"Of course it was only a dream," said the little man. "You don't really believe——"

"I am going straight home to find out first," laughed Tim, "and then I'll gladly tell you what I believe."

Hastily saying good-bye to the stranger, he hurried away. So eager was he to be home that he forgot how tired he was. He had not gone far from the city, however,

when his feet began to drag heavily, and he felt so tired that he could not go another yard. Wearily he crept under a hedge and was soon fast asleep.

The sun was beating down upon him when he awoke and set off again. Some hours later a very tired man limped through the village of Lismore and timidly opened the door of his cabin. How Norah teased him when he told her about his journey to Dublin! In truth, she was very angry with him for wasting his time and money in such a silly manner.

She was still more angry when Tim calmly told her that he was going to sell his little patch of ground.

Of course she asked the reason, but he would not tell her. A few days later Tim's potato-patch was sold, and he bought old Paddy's field, which had nothing in it but big stones and thistles and furze-bushes.

Every one in the village thought that Timothy was quite mad to sell a good piece of ground and in its place buy the worthless field where Paddy grazed an old donkey that was almost as old and feeble as its owner. How they pitied poor Norah for having such a fool for a husband! Indeed Norah herself

wept bitterly over her misfortunes whenever Timothy was not at hand to be scolded.

Timothy, however, paid no heed to all the gossip about him, and took little notice even of Norah's scoldings. Was he not the proud owner of the field where his fortune lay hidden? He was content, therefore to wait for a moonlight night before starting on his big adventure.

One evening when the new moon shone peacefully down on the sleeping village, Tim stole out of his cabin, and, carrying a big spade across his shoulder, made his way to the field.

He soon found the spot he was looking for. Not far from the hedge a large furze-bush grew beside a little hollow, just as the little man had told him. Quickly he began to dig, expecting any moment to unearth his treasure. The hole became deeper and deeper. Still he dug steadily until suddenly his spade struck against a big stone. It was firmly buried in the ground, so he decided to dig round it. It was bigger than he had thought. He struck his spade against it again, and to his surprise it gave forth a hollow sound.

"Ah," he thought, "it won't be so heavy to lift as I feared."

He tried to get his hands underneath the big stone to pull it out, but not an inch would it move in spite of all his struggles. Suddenly he heard a strange rumbling noise beneath him. Putting his ear against the big stone, he listened. And what do you think he heard? Well, it certainly made every hair on his head stand on end.

"Come on," cried one tiny voice. "How shall we annoy Tim?"

"Take him up the mountain," cried another voice. "He will make a nice mouthful for the old dragon. It's a long time since he had a good meal."

At this, Tim shook like a potato-blossom in a storm.

"No," said a third voice, "throw him in the bog, head over heels!"

A peal of elfish laughter greeted this threat.

"Stop!" cried a fourth voice, "put him in the——" But Tim heard no more. He had fainted from sheer fright. About an hour later his senses came back and he went slowly home to his cabin, not daring to breathe a word of his strange adventure to Norah.

Next evening the hope that he might find the crock of gold got the better of his fears.

As soon as darkness fell, off he went to the field.

Jumping into the pit he began to work. For a long time he dug and at last got his hands right under the stone. Then with a long pull and a hard pull he rolled away the stone.

At once a fierce gust of wind rushed up from the hole and down fell Tim—down—down—down—he went until he thumped upon what seemed to be a floor of sharp pins. The poor man roared with pain. Then he heard a sudden scamper of feet and a chorus of voices cried out:—

“Timothy dear,  
Welcome down here;  
Timothy dear,  
Welcome down here.”

Tim’s teeth chattered like magpies with fright, as he replied:—

“I’m m-much obliged, gen—gentlemen, to—to you all, fo—for—your welcome to—to a poor stranger.”

Though he had heard all the voices about him, he could see nothing as everything was in darkness.



Suddenly, some one pulled Tim by the hair of his head and dragged him away. Faster and faster he went; faster than the wind, for he heard it behind him, trying to keep up with him.

On, on, on he went, till suddenly he stopped with a jerk, and someone said, "Well, Tim, how did you like your ride?"

"Very well, thank you," said Tim, thinking it wise to be polite. "It was a good horse I rode, surely."

There was a loud burst of laughter at Tim's answer, and then much whispering. At last a squeaky voice cried, "Shut your eyes, Tim, and you will see!"

"Surely that is a queer way of seeing," said Tim, "but I'll do as you bid me." And he closed his eyes.

Presently he felt a small, warm hand gently stroking his eyelids. In a moment he was ordered to open his eyes. He found himself in a crowd of little men dressed in green and yellow. From their jackets hung scores of tiny bells which jingled merrily as they danced round in a circle. Round and round they went to the music of a gay tune played by the fairy pipers.

Suddenly they broke off and amid loud

laughter pelted one another with golden guineas and silver shillings. For the first time Tim began to enjoy the fun, and he found himself joining in their laughter.

At length one of the elves made his way towards Tim.

"We have changed our minds about you, Tim, because we think you are an honest man and know how to behave yourself in strange company. We will find a neighbour of yours who will do just as well to give to the old dragon."

"Oh, then long life to you, sir," cried Tim. "I am very glad to hear that."

"But what will you say, Tim," asked the little fellow, "if we fill your pockets with these golden guineas?"

Tim was too surprised to speak. He tried to say something but words failed him.

"Come now, Tim," the fairies pressed him, "what will you say?"

"I'll not be able to say my prayers for a month for thanking you," gasped Tim at last. "Indeed I will know what to do with the money. I'll make a grand lady of Norah, my wife. She has been a good wife to me. We'll have a nice lot of pork for dinner.

And I'll build a new cabin; and I'll have a fresh egg every morning for my breakfast. And I'll snap my fingers at the squire and beat his hounds if they come coursing through my fields. Oh, yes, I must have a new plough. To be sure I almost forgot about the plough. Norah shall have a new gown. I'll get a new pair of breeches and a beautiful coat with shining buttons. Then I must buy a cow, and a horse to ride, or maybe two. Hurrah! I'll have everything that I want—and that's what I'll do."

Tim broke off breathlessly.

"Take care, Tim," the little fellow warned him, "your money might go even faster than it came."

But Tim paid no heed to his words. Heaps of gold lay around him, and he filled all the pockets in his coat and in his waistcoat and in his breeches. Not content with that, he stuffed some of the guineas into his shoes and thought himself very clever!

"Now go home, Timothy," cried the little people, "and think yourself a very lucky man."

"Oh, I hope we shall meet again. Perhaps you will ask me to see you again. I would so like to tell you how I spent the money."

To this there was no answer, only another shout.

"Go home, Timothy! Go home! But shut your eyes or you'll never see the light of day again."

Tim shut his eyes, and away he was whisked as before. On, on he went till again he stopped all of a sudden.

He sat up and rubbed his eyes with his two thumbs—and where was he? Why, in the same old pit in the field, and his wife Norah was shaking him by the collar of his coat.

"You lazy good-for-nothing. So—this—is—how—you—spend—your—time." At each word the angry woman gave Tim a slap that set all his teeth chattering.

"Leave off, leave off now," he shouted, "and I'll show you my pockets full of gold."

He put his hands in his pockets, but alas, he pulled out only a handful of small pebbles, mixed with yellow blossoms from the furze-bush.

He looked around him and saw the great stone that he thought he had pulled aside, lying as if it never had been stirred. The hole was just as he had made it.

Very sorrowfully Tim followed his wife home, and strange to say, from that night

he never had any more dreams. Nor did he ever go digging in old bog-holes in the fields.

He worked hard, and was soon able to buy back his little potato patch. When he does speak of the fairies' guineas he never fails to add at the end of the story, "If they had stayed with me, I would not have had any luck with them. They would have burned holes in my pockets—and got out that way!"

# THE KING AND THE PLEDGED SWORD

JOHN R. CROSSLAND

ABOUT one thousand years ago, when A King Athelstan ruled in England, a Danish invader, Godifed by name, came across the seas to seize the province of Bernicia. The King of the Scots, Constantine, arranged to assist Godifed in this raid, and when Athelstan heard of the alliance he immediately set off northwards with an army and much treasure, to punish the Scottish King.

The news of the King's approach soon travelled north, and the Abbot Wulstan of Beverley, or Beverlega, in East Yorkshire, heard of it. Thinking the King might pass through the town he hastily summoned a meeting of his Chapter—or management committee of the abbey—to discuss how Athelstan might be persuaded to give help to the church.

The most cunning of all the brotherhood was one Godruff, who was cellarer. He

thought out a clever, yet wily scheme, and so pleased were, the Abbot and his Chapter that Godruff was selected to carry it into effect.

Off hurried the cellarer, with picked companions, to meet the King's army. The royal procession had entered Lincolnshire, and Athelstan felt that, in order that success might attend his aims, he should commit his cause to God and the saints. Turning to one of his followers, named Larwulf, he exclaimed: "Larwulf, we must render our dues to heaven and commit ourselves to God and the holy saints. We will turn aside and rest at Lincoln, that I may worship in the church there!"

On marched the army until suddenly, in the distance, a party of pilgrims appeared, singing lustily as they drew nearer.

"Stay," commanded the King as they approached. "Who are ye, and whence come ye?"

Their leader, who was better known as Godruff the cellarer of Beverlega stepped forth and addressed the King.

"We are but humble pilgrims, O King."

"And why sing ye such gladsome songs of praise?" demanded Athelstan.

"For joy of deliverance from the ills of the flesh," retorted Godruff. "We were all halt, lame or sick, but have made the pilgrimage to the shrine of the holy and blessed St. John of Beverlega—where we were healed of our infirmities. We rejoice for the good that the blessed saint has done to us."

"This is a miracle," quoth the King. "Methinks I have heard of this holy saint before. Did we not, Larwulf, have safe lodging and hospitable treatment at the monastery of Beverlega when we returned from driving out the Danes from the north, near the Roman Wall?"

"Ay, O King," returned Larwulf, "it was in the first year of your reign. In return for the hospitality received you granted many privileges to the monastery, to its church, and to the town."

"True," said Athelstan, "and we will visit this holy shrine once again. We will pass through Lincoln, and rest with the Abbot of Beverlega, that I might fast, pray and pay my dues at the shrine of St. John."

Thereupon the King summoned his captains, and gave them orders to proceed to York, there to await his coming after his visit to the church at Beverlega.



Turning to the pilgrims he said, "Thanks for your time your story.  
 Take gold for your sustenance and more for the erection, in your own land, of a Chapel in honour of the blessed Saint John, who made you well."

The King's treasurer gave riches to the pilgrims as the King had ordered, and the procession moved northwards. Athelstan and Larwulf made for Beverlega, while the army hurried north to York.

Godruff soon sent a messenger by devious ways to Beverlega, so that, by the time the King approached the town, the Abbot Wulstan was ready to receive him in fitting manner. A great banquet was laid on the boards of the refectory, and the travel-weary monarch felt that truly the monastery at Beverlega was a place to bear in mind.

After the repast the King asked the Abbot to come sit by him, while he explained the reason of his visit. He told Wulstan the story of the pilgrims, and though the Abbot must have been inwardly shaking with mirth he put on a grave face and vouched for all that the so-called pilgrims had said.

So the King stated that his full intention was to visit the holy shrine of St. John of

Beverlega at midnight. There he would pray and commit his army to the care of the Saint. Moreover, he expressed a wish that all the monks of the brotherhood should accompany him in procession to the church, and that the choir should sing hymns as they marched.

Near midnight, by the light of many torches, the stately procession filed into the church. The King walked first, followed by Larwulf, who carried the King's sword. Up to the altar strode Athelstan, throwing himself down before it, and offering up fervent prayers for the success of his army.

"If by this aid I meet with success," he prayed, "I vow that unto this church will I give costly gifts and much treasure. In pledge of this vow do I here and now place my royal sword on Thy holy altar. After the battle, if Thy protection has given me the victory, I will return to praise Thee. Then will I redeem my vows and my sword by the gifts and treasure I have vowed to Thee."

When the King finally marched away from Beverlega, he was accompanied by the banner of St. John, which was to go before him into the battle.

The eve of the battle arrived and Athelstan was tossing restlessly in his tent in the camp.

He could not sleep, for his mind was set on the work of the morrow.

Suddenly the flap of his tent moved. A hand stole in and drew open the tent. Then the face and figure of an old man were seen. The stranger, bearded, and with long and glistening white hair, approached the King's couch. He wore a long robe of white, and seemed like a creature of another world. Startled, Athelstan reached out for his weapons, but the vision raised a hand.

"Peace, O King," he said, in a deep voice, "nothing shall harm thee—for I bring thee good tidings."

"And who art thou?" demanded the King.

"Put up thy weapon, and then thou shalt hear," said the strange old man. "Let me tell thee my errand, and who I am shalt thou then learn."

"Speak on," returned the King.

Coming nearer to the couch the visitor spoke: "Be not afraid. I am he whose assistance and protection thou sought at the altar at Beverlega. I am St. John of Beverlega himself. Thy prayers have been heard and thy requests are granted. To-morrow thou shalt cross the river and do battle with thy foes. Fear not for victory shall be thine.

Then, when thou returnest southward, forget not thy vows made at my altar. Fare thee well."

As he spoke these words the old man turned, went from the tent, and disappeared into the night. Not even the sentries on duty could say where he had gone, for they swore that no one had come near the King's tent.

The morrow came, and the King's forces crossed the river and attacked their Scottish enemies. So fiercely did they fight that ere long the Scottish lines broke, and the army fled. Athelstan chased the routed Scots and compelled their King to do homage to him. Then he gathered his own forces and marched south, in due course arriving at Beverlega.

Again, by some curious means, the Abbot and the brotherhood were ready to receive him with due entertainment and homage. The King went to the altar of St. John and redeemed his sword, promising to endow the church and the brotherhood with gifts ere he left the town.

Coming from the altar Athelstan espied Godruff, who was keeping well in the background, for some reason best known to himself. "Come hither, brother," called the King, and Godruff was fain to obey.

"Who art thou?" demanded Athelstan.

"I am Godruff, an humble brother of the Church."

"And have I not seen thy face before?" asked the King.

"It is scarcely likely," retorted Godruff, "for I have been living apart in close seclusion, by reason of a vow I have made."

"Yet, thou art mightily like unto the great St. John of Beverlega himself, who appeared to me in my tent before the battle of Brunnanburg."

Godruff was dismayed at this curiosity and suspicion on the part of the King, but his cunning came quickly to his aid.

"O King," he replied, "it may well be that I am like the good saint of Beverlega, for I am descended from him, and beforetime have strangers noted that I had features alike unto his—for which I praise God."

The King, not knowing that St. John had been dead over two hundred years, was satisfied and passed on, letting the matter slip from his memory. Before he left the town he founded a college of canons and gave great riches for its upkeep.

He granted to the church the power of sanctuary, granting the placing of a Fridstool

or Frithstool before the altar. This meant that a criminal of any kind, even a murderer, might ensure full freedom from the law if he could escape to the church and seat himself in the Fridstool. This stool still remains in Beverley Minster—a chair hewn from a solid block of stone. Two others exist to-day, one at Hexham, and the other in the parish church of Sprotborough, near Doncaster.

Athelstan ordered four stones to be erected, one to the north, one to the south, one to the east and one to the west, each one mile distant from the church. Inside these limits was to remain privileged ground belonging to the brotherhood.

He gave great treasure for the beautifying of the church, and especially the altar, and so well did the Abbot use the money that ere long the minster of Beverlega became the object of pilgrimage for people all over the land. The story of Athelstan's good fortune, owing to the protection of St. John of Beverlega, was handed down from generation to generation and the banner of the saint was carried in the battle of Northallerton, in 1138.

King Henry V., nearly a hundred years later, heard how, in his great victory at Agincourt (1415), a white horse was seen

moving in the ranks of the English army, and bearing on its back the blessed saint of Beverlega, whose words of cheer and encouragement gained the victory for England. The brothers of Beverlega added to this by asserting that, during the battle, the sacred bones of St. John moved in the tomb, and drops of blood squeezed their way through the stone. So impressed was King Henry that, when he returned, with his French bride, he came north to worship at the shrine of St. John.

So Beverlega flourished until, when Henry VIII. resolved to suppress the monasteries, his eyes turned on the treasures earlier monarchs had poured on the church and town.

The King's men came north, and when they had finished their task only the church remained—and even that was stripped of all the beautiful and valuable things it cherished.

What a pity the wily Godruff, cellarer of olden days, had not been there to meet the Tudor invasion. Doubtless he would have thought out some scheme to prevent the sacking of the church. He had been dead for six hundred years, however, and had evidently not left a successor with craft and cunning like his own.

# THE THREE LOST COWS

HILDA A. E. ROBERTS

A FARMER who lived in South Carmarthenshire had a number of cows. One day three of them strayed and got lost. The farmer searched for hours but without success.

At last he went all the way to Cwrt-y-Cadno and consulted the celebrated Dr. Harries, the "Wise Man."

"You will have to wait until to-morrow morning," said the "Wise Man." "I must consult my books and it will take a long time."

The poor farmer felt very disappointed. He did not want to spend a night away from home, but he knew he would have to be patient and wait. So he went out to look for a place where he might hire a bed for the night.

On his way out, however, he saw the doctor's barn. It was nearly full of straw. So he thought he would sleep there



"Why not?" said he. "It is clean and dry and quite comfortable. I might as well spend the night here and keep my money in my pocket, instead of paying for a bed in the inn."

So he lay on the pile of straw and was very soon fast asleep.

Quite comfortably he slept for a few hours. Then suddenly he was awakened by the sound of footsteps. He sat up, rubbed his eyes and whom should he see walking into the barn where he lay, but the "Wise Man" himself!

The "Wise Man" set down his lantern and looked round about him. Now he did not think for a moment that the farmer was on top of the straw. He thought he would be safe in bed in a neighbouring inn.

The farmer sat quite still and watched.

Soon he saw the old doctor drawing a circle round himself on the middle of the floor. This was a magic circle.

Next he called the names of seven ugly demons. Instantly they appeared, flying through the air, and stood round the magic circle. The doctor spoke to the first one.

"Where are those three cows that the farmer lost?"

The demon would not reply. Again the doctor asked:

"Where are those three cows that the farmer lost?"

The demon answered:

"Pig in straw."

"That is not an answer to my question," said the doctor, and he asked the second demon.

This one, too, would not reply. Then he passed on to the next and the next, and so on, all round the ring of demons, and each time no reply was given.

"You are all very stupid, to-night," roared the doctor, and he turned to the seventh one.

"You tell me," he said.

And the seventh demon replied in a voice, loud and clear.

"They will be standing on Carmarthen bridge at noon, to-morrow."

Then the seven demons disappeared, and the "Wise Man" picked up his lantern and walked out of the barn, smiling to himself, as if well pleased.

Now the farmer, who had been hiding in the straw, had seen and heard all. So he made up his mind to go to Carmarthen at once, so as to be ready on the bridge by noon.

Off he went on foot, and he reached Carmarthen bridge just as the clock was striking twelve o'clock, mid-day!

The three cows were there, looking as if they had never wandered at all. The farmer was delighted.

He drove them along before him. But before they had travelled half a mile out of the town they slipped and fell, all three, and then lay by the roadside, as if they were dead. In vain did the farmer call "Up! Up!" The three cows would not move.

Back the poor man had to go, all the way to Cwrt-y-Cadno again, to consult the doctor.

"Serve thee right!" said the latter when the farmer had told his story. "I cast a spell on thy cows, because thou didst run away from the barn last night, without paying me for the information I did get for thee!"

The farmer paid the doctor a sum of money and was then told to retrace his steps.

To his great joy, he found the three cows quite well and grazing along the hedgerow as though nothing had ever been wrong with them!

"Well! All's well that ends well," said the farmer, and away he drove them home again.

# LAZY MOLLY

CECILY M RUTLEY

THERE once lived in Tavistock two serving girls. Their names were Molly and Kate, and they were both very fond of the pixies.

They knew how these little people love water, and every night, before they went to bed, they filled a bucket with fresh, clear water, and placed it in the kitchen. In the morning when they came downstairs they often found some silver pennies lying at the bottom of the bucket, which the grateful little pixies had dropped into the water for them.

One night Molly and Kate forgot all about filling the bucket, and went to bed leaving it standing empty in the chimney-nook. Perhaps they had been out, or had had some friends to visit them, or perhaps they were very tired. We are not told the reason of their forgetfulness, but there it was.

PRESENTLY the pixies came flying into the house through crannies and keyholes to look

for their bucket of water. When they found it empty they were very disappointed. "Those tiresome girls have forgotten to fill it!" one little pixy cried. "Let us go up and ask them why!"

So upstairs whisked the pixies in the twinkling of an eye. Through the keyhole into the girls' bedroom they popped, and skipped and hopped excitedly about.

"The girls have forgotten our water!" cried one of them.

"It is very tiresome of them!" cried another.

"We are *very* much annoyed!" said a third.

Now Kate was still awake, and she heard what the pixies said. She nudged Molly who was fast asleep. "Wake up, Molly!" she cried. "Wake up at once!"

"What is the matter?" asked Molly in a very sleepy voice. "Why are you waking me?" I was having *such* a beautiful dream."

"We forgot to fill the pixies' bucket with water," said Kate.

"They are very annoyed at our neglect. Listen! You can hear them grumbling and complaining in this room."

But Molly just pulled the bedclothes over her head, and turned over on her side. "Let

them complain," she said. "I'm going to sleep again."

"Oh, you *mustn't*, Molly" cried Kate. "Jump up, and let us go down and fill the bucket now."

"Not I," said foolish Molly in a very drowsy voice. "I wouldn't get out of my bed now to please all the pixies in Devonshire!" And next moment she was fast asleep.

Alas! The pixies had heard her, and Molly was to be punished for her laziness as you soon shall hear.

"I'll go anyway," said Kate. "Poor little pixies. They shall have their water. They are always very kind to us."

So she jumped out of bed and ran downstairs. She filled the empty bucket, then crept upstairs again. When she went back into the bedroom the pixies were still there. She could not see them, for it was too dark. But she could hear their shrill little voices quite clearly.

"How shall we punish that lazy girl?" asked one.

"Let's pinch her all over!" suggested another.

"Let's nip her hard!" cried a third.

"Let us tear to bits her new cherry-

coloured bonnet and ribbons!" suggested a fourth.

"Let's give her the toothache!" said a fifth pixy.

"Let's give her a red nose!" cried a sixth.

"Oh, she is too pretty for us to do that!" cried a seventh little pixy who was rather kinder than the rest.

"I know!" cried an eighth pixy. "We'll give her a lame leg!"

"Not to last for always!" said the kind one.

"No!" replied the other. "It shall last for seven years. But then it shall only be cured if Molly finds this plant that grows on Dartmoor. Its name is . . ." and the pixy pronounced, very slowly and clearly, the name of a plant that had seven syllables.

"Oh, how shall I remember it!" cried Kate who had been listening to the pixies' debate. "It is a long word. Let me see, this is it," and she repeated the name over and over again to herself until she fell asleep.

The next morning, when she woke, the first thing she thought of was the long name. "Oh!" she cried, sitting up in bed. "I have quite forgotten it," and although she tried her hardest to recall it to her mind not one syllable could she remember.

Then Molly woke, and jumped out of bed. "Oh, whatever *has* happened to me?" she cried. "Oh, Kate, one of my legs is quite lame!"

"That is the punishment the pixies have sent you for being lazy last night, and not getting up and going downstairs with me to fill their bucket with water," said Kate sadly.

"Oh, the horrid, nasty, unkind little creatures," cried Molly, stamping her good leg on the floor.

"Hush!" cried Kate. "Do be careful what you are saying. If the pixies hear you they may send you a worse punishment." Then she told Molly all that she had heard them saying, and how in seven years' time she would be cured of her lameness if she could find a certain plant that grew on Dartmoor.

"What is its name?" asked Molly.

"I have forgotten it," said Kate. "All I know is that it is a very long name, but I cannot remember a single syllable."

"Oh, how *stupid* of you!" cried Molly, and she stamped her foot again. But it was not the slightest use her being cross and angry. Lame she was, and lame she continued to be in her right leg for nearly seven years.

Then one day, when the seven years were



drawing to an end, Molly said, "I am going on to the Moor to gather mushrooms. Come with me, Kate. Perhaps we may find the plant the pixies spoke of." Molly was not cross about her lameness any longer, and had grown quite cheerful and patient. But each time she went on to Dartmoor she hoped she might find the plant the name of which had seven syllables.

"I am tired of looking for it!" said Kate. "We have been looking for nearly seven years now, and all we can find are plants with short and simple names that we know quite well."

"Perhaps the pixies have not allowed us to find it yet," said Molly. "They said I was to be lame for seven years. But now that time is nearly over, perhaps we shall be able to discover it."

"I cannot come to-day, anyway," said Kate. "I have some work to finish."

So Molly took her basket, and climbed up on to Dartmoor by herself. She knew where the best mushrooms were always to be found, and sure enough, there were more than ever about, and such beauties they were this bright sunny morning.

Molly was stooping down to pluck a mush-

room, when a short distance away she saw a strange little boy, with a very merry face, suddenly start up from the ground and come tumbling head over heels towards her. In his hand he was holding a plant.

"Who are you?" asked Molly, standing up.

The boy did not answer, but he tumbled right up to Molly, and struck her lame leg with the plant. And the next moment her lameness had gone!

The boy had gone, too, so Molly could not thank him. She filled her basket with mushrooms, then hastened home. Kate was standing at the door of the house watching for her. "Why, Molly," she cried as Molly came skipping gaily up the path, "whatever *has* happened? Why, you are not lame any longer!"

"No!" cried Molly in a very joyful voice. "I am *not*." Then she told Kate about the strange boy and his plant.

"That must have been the plant the pixies mentioned," said Kate. "I don't expect, as you said, that they ever meant us to find it for ourselves in case you should have been cured too soon. But, oh, Molly," she added, "now you are cured *do* be careful never to annoy the pixies again."

"You need have no fear of that," cried

Molly. "It is much too nasty and tiresome being lame for me to forget. Dear little pixies! I *do* thank you for sending that plant to make me well again."

"I expect the pixies have heard you," said Kate.

"I hope they have," said Molly "For I *am* grateful."

After that Molly found that her dancing had very much improved. She could now dance much more gracefully than before she became lame. And on May Day, when the festivities and frolics were held on the village green, the best dancer of all who were there dancing round the Maypole was lazy Molly.

# FARMER WEATHERSKY

SIR GEORGE DASENT

LONG ago there lived a couple who had an only son named Jack. The old dame thought it was high time that her son should go out into the world and learn to earn a livelihood, and she bade her husband go with him, and bind him as an apprentice.

"Whatever you do," she charged him, "be sure you bind him to someone who will teach him to be master above all masters," and so saying she put some food and tobacco into a bag, and packed them both off.

Jack and his father wandered from one master to another, but without success. All to whom they applied declared that they could make the lad as good at his business as themselves, but that to make him better was impossible.

When the man returned to his wife with this answer, she said, "I don't care what you make of him, but this I say and this I maintain; you must bind him to one who will

make him master above all masters." With that she packed up some more food and another roll of tobacco, and father and son had to start upon their travels once more.

After walking for some distance they came to a frozen lake, and saw a man rushing towards them in a sledge drawn by a black horse.

"Whither away?" asked the man.

"Well," said the father, "I want to bind my son apprentice to someone who can teach him to earn a livelihood, but my old dame is so high and mighty that she insists upon his being taught to be master above all masters."

"Well met then," cried the stranger; "I am the man for your money, for I am seeking just such an apprentice. Up with you behind!" he cried to the lad, and immediately they mounted, both of them, horse, sledge and all, right up into the air.

"Hold," cried the lad's father, "you have not told me your name yet, nor where you live."

"Oh," replied the master, "I am at home alike north and south, east and west, and my name is Farmer Weathersky. In a year and a day you may come here again, and I will tell you how your son suits me."

With that, away went the sledge through the air, and soon had altogether disappeared from view.

When the man reached home, the old dame asked what had become of her son.

"Heaven knows," replied the old man, "for I am sure I don't understand it. They both went up aloft," and he related the story of Jack's disappearance.

When the woman discovered that he could not tell her when her son's apprenticeship would end, nor whither he had gone, she became very indignant, and nothing would content her but her husband must start immediately and search for Jack.

The man had walked some distance, when he came to a great forest which stretched out before him all day as he travelled through it. Darkness fell, when seeing a bright light in the distance, he made his way towards it. After journeying a long time he came to a little hut beneath a rock, and beside the hut stood an old hag drawing water from the well with her nose, so long was it.

"Good-evening, mother," began the man.

"The same to you," replied the old hag. "It is hundreds of years since any one has called me mother."

"Can I lodge here to-night?" asked the man.

"No, that you can't," she replied.

Saying nothing, the man pulled out his roll of tobacco, lighted his pipe, and gave the old dame a whiff and a pinch of snuff. This delighted her so that she danced for joy, and finally consented that the man should have a lodging for the night in her house.

Next morning he began to make inquiries regarding Farmer Weathersky.

"I have never heard of him," said the woman, "but I rule over all the four-footed animals; perhaps some of these may know."

She played them all home with her pipe, and, when they were assembled, questioned them, but not one knew anything about Farmer Weathersky.

"Well," said the old woman, "I am one of three sisters; perhaps one of the others may be able to give you the information. I will lend you my horse and sledge, and you can be at her house by nightfall, although it is at least three hundred miles thither by the shortest route."

The man set off in the sledge, and by nightfall had reached the house. Here the previous performance was repeated; the old woman refused to let him stay there that night but

yielded in the end, and in the morning he questioned her regarding Farmer Weathersky.

This old woman was mistress over all the fish in the sea, and she played them home with her pipe, and asked them numerous questions, but not one of them could tell her anything about Farmer Weathersky.

There was still another sister left, and the old woman lent her guest a horse and sledge to make the journey to her house, which was reached at nightfall although the distance was at least six hundred miles

Here exactly the same performance was gone through which had taken place twice already. This old woman bore rule over all the birds of the air, and when she had played them home and they were all mustered, it was discovered that the eagle was missing. In a little while he came flying home, saying that he had just come from Farmer Weathersky's.

The old woman ordered him to guide the man thither, but the eagle declared he could not go until he had something to eat, and that he must be allowed to rest until the following day. He was so tired, he said, with flying such a long distance, that he could scarce rise from the earth.



When he had eaten his fill and taken a long rest, the old dame pulled a feather out of the eagle's tail and put the man there in its stead. The eagle, rising into the air, flew swiftly for many hours, but with all his exertions it was midnight before they approached Farmer Weathersky's house.

When they arrived, the eagle remarked, "There are heaps of corpses lying about outside, but don't let that disturb you. Inside the house they are all in such deep slumber that 'twill be hard work to wake them. You must go straight to the table drawer, and take out of it three crumbs of bread. When you hear some one snoring loudly, pull three feathers out of his head; even that will not awake him."

The man carried out the eagle's instructions to the letter, and, after having taken the three crumbs, pulled the first feather out of the sleeper's head.

"Oof!" growled Farmer Weathersky, for it was he who snored so loudly.

Immediately the man pulled out another feather.

"Oof!" grunted Farmer Weathersky again. But when he tugged out the third, the man thought roof and walls would have been rent

asunder with the roar Farmer Weathersky uttered, yet for all that he still slept on and snored.

Then the eagle gave him further directions. He went into the yard and at the stable door stumbled against a large gray stone. This stone he lifted and found underneath three chips of wood which he picked up. Then he knocked at the stable door, which opened of itself, threw down the three crumbs of bread, and when a hare came and ate them he caught and kept the animal.

The eagle now bade the man pull three feathers out of his tail and put the hare, the stone, the chips of wood and himself there instead, then he started to fly home with them all.

After travelling a long way, the eagle alighted upon a rock to rest.

"Do you see anything?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the man, "I see a flock of crows flying after us."

"We had better be off then," said the eagle, rising into the air.

After awhile, in answer to his inquiries, the man informed him that the crows were close behind

"Drop the three feathers you pulled out

of Farmer Weathersky's head," said the eagle.

The man obeyed, and instantly the feathers turned into a flock of ravens which speedily drove the crows home again.

The eagle flew a long way, and then sat down upon another stone to rest. He asked the same questions once more, and the man replied that he thought he saw something in the distance coming towards them; then, a little while after the eagle had resumed his flight, he told him that Farmer Weathersky was at their heels.

"Let fall the chips of wood which you took from under the gray stone at the stable door," said the eagle; and in a twinkling the chips had grown up into a thick forest, so that Farmer Weathersky had to go home to fetch an axe to hew his way through.

While he was gone, the eagle flew a prodigious distance, but at last was obliged to sit down upon a fir tree to rest. He asked the usual questions, and when the man replied that he fancied he caught a glimpse of something very far away, he flew off with all speed. Presently, upon being told that Farmer Weathersky was close behind, he bade the man drop the great stone that he had found at the stable door.

As the stone fell, it became a high mountain, through which Farmer Weathersky had to quarry a passage for himself. When he was half-way through, he tripped and broke one of his legs, and was obliged to limp home and patch it up as best he might.

While he was hobbling back, the eagle flew with all speed and soon was at the man's house. Directly they reached home, the man went into the churchyard and sprinkled Christian mould over the hare, when, just as he had expected, the animal turned into his son Jack.

You may imagine that Jack's mother was overjoyed to have her son restored to her, yet even then she was dissatisfied in respect of his trade, and could not rest until she had received a proof that he was actually "master above all masters."

Accordingly, when fair time came round, the lad changed himself into a bay horse, and requested his father to lead him to the fair.

"When any one comes to buy me," he said, "you may say that my price is one hundred dollars; but be sure not to forget to take off my headstall; if you do, Farmer Weathersky will keep me for ever, for it is he whom you will encounter in guise of a dealer."

What Jack had foreseen came to pass. A dealer came, who professed a great wish to purchase the horse. He paid a hundred dollars down, but when the bargain was concluded and Jack's father had pocketed the money, the horse-dealer demanded the headstall.

"Nay," objected the man, "that is not included in the bargain, and, besides, I cannot let you have the headstall, for I have other horses to bring to town to-morrow."

They parted, and each went his way, but before either had gone far, Jack resumed his own shape and ran off, and when his father reached home, there sat Jack in the ingle.

On the following day he transformed himself into a brown horse, whose price was to be two hundred dollars, and everything occurred as on the day before. On the third morning he became a black horse, but this time the cunning dealer took the precaution of giving the man a glass of brandy, which resulted in his forgetting to take off the headstall, and Farmer Weathersky disappeared with the horse.

Before long he came to an inn, and, thinking that another glass of brandy would be welcome, he put a barrel of red-hot nails

under the horse's nose, and a sieve of oats under his tail, fastened the halter to a hook, and went into the inn.

The horse stamped and pawed, and snorted and reared. Fortunately, a girl came out, and, seeing the poor creature's plight, took pity upon it.

"Oh, poor thing," she said, "what a cruel master you must have, who could treat you so." And with that she pulled the halter off the hook, so that the horse might turn round and eat the oats.

"I'm coming to you!" roared Farmer Weathersky, rushing out of the door.

But already the horse had shaken off his headstall, and plunged into the duck-pond, where he turned himself into a tiny fish.

In jumped Farmer Weathersky after him, and changed himself into an enormous pike. Then Jack transformed himself into a dove, and Farmer Weathersky became a hawk, and chased and struck at the dove.

They passed the palace, where a princess stood at the window, watching the struggle.

"Ah, poor dove," she cried, "if only you knew what I know, you would fly to me through this window."

The dove came flying in through the

window, and once more resumed the form of Jack, who told his own story.

"Turn yourself into a gold ring, and put yourself on my finger," said the princess.

"Nay," replied Jack, "that would never do, for then Farmer Weathersky would strike the king with sickness, and no one would be able to make him well until the wicked magician himself came, pretending to be a great doctor and for his fee he would demand the gold ring."

"Then I would say that I had it from my mother, and cannot part with it," said the princess.

Being thus reassured, Jack changed himself into a gold ring and put himself on the princess's finger, so that Farmer Weathersky could not get at him.

But soon the events happened which had been foretold by Jack, the king fell sick, and not a physician in the kingdom was of any avail until Farmer Weathersky appeared, offering to restore him to health, if he might have the ring from the princess's finger as his fee.

The king sent a messenger to the princess, but she replied she could not part with the

ring, which had been given to her by her mother.

When this refusal was brought to him, the king flew into a passion, and declared he would have the ring, no matter who had left it to his daughter.

"Well," said the princess, "it is not worth quarrelling about. I cannot get it off, so if you want the ring you must take my finger too."

"If you will let me try," said Farmer Weathersky, "I will soon get it off for you."

"No, thank you," answered the princess, "I prefer to try myself." And, running to the hearth, she sprinkled ashes on her finger. Instantly the ring slipped off and was lost among the ashes. Farmer Weathersky turned himself into a cock, who scratched and scraped until he was covered with ashes up to the ears.

While he was thus busily engaged, Jack took the form of a fox, and bit off the cock's head, so that was the end of Farmer Weathersky.



# THE GOLD OF UPSALL

JOHN R. CROSSLAND

**I**N the north of Yorkshire the North York Moors, stretching from the coast near Whitby, are scored by various streams which flow southwards to join the Derwent.

The last spur of hills to the east, separated from the Clevedon hills and the Moors by the valley of the Rye, is known as the Hambleton Hills. Here the land falls gently down till we come to the Plain of York, the basin of the rivers Swale and Ure, as they journey to form the Ouse.

Perched high on the Hambleton Hills, with wide views to the north and west, is the tiny village of Upsall. There are ruins here—and where ruins exist one is prepared to find legend also.

So the people of Upsall keep evergreen the story of the man who, in olden days, found treasure near these ruins.

The castle that stood where the ruins now crumble, was a residence of the family of

Scroopes. They also had Bolton Castle, in Wensleydale, and here Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned, though guarded so lightly that she was able to attempt to escape.

But to our story. For the sake of a name we will call our hero William. The old story mentions no name, but that does not trouble us when dealing with folk tales. Any name will suffice. Then William shall it be.

William was used to going to bed at night and sleeping very soundly till morning. But there came a time when he found his rest broken by dreams. Three times he dreamed, and the dream was the same on each occasion. And what a queer dream it was! A voice seemed to say to him, "Go stand on London Bridge, and you will hear of good fortune." That was all—but it was enough to set poor William thinking.

He had never been to London, nor did he know that the great city was more than two hundred miles away. He thought and thought, and pondered deeply all day long.

At last he decided to go to London and stand on the Bridge. The only way to reach the city was by walking so off he set one bright morning to walk till he came to London Bridge.

At length his patience and effort were rewarded and he found himself standing on the famous London Bridge, gazing with wonder at the crowds of people who hurried and jostled each other as they crossed it.

At last William began to tire and thought that, after all, it was a foolish thing to walk to London just because he had had three dreams.

He had just decided to turn away when an old gentleman, with a very kindly face, stopped and asked him why he had been standing there so long.

"Are you waiting for someone?" he asked. William decided to tell the truth, and replied "I am waiting for something, but I know not what." And he told the gentleman of his three dreams.

"That is indeed strange," said the kind old man. "I, too had a dream last night, and it, also, was about something good. In my dream I heard a voice telling me where there was hidden gold."

"Hidden gold," gasped William. Here certainly was something to his advantage. "And where is this gold to be found?"

"Under an elder bush in the north-west

corner of Upsall Castle yard! Do you know the place?" the gentleman replied.

William felt his face flushing red, so he turned to look over the bridge into the river.

"No, I'm sorry," he returned, "I have never heard of the place."

"I wish I knew," said the old gentleman, as he bade William "Good day."

William watched him out of sight, and then set off, on foot, to hurry back home.

His return journey was accomplished without adventure, and as soon as he arrived without waiting to rest, he took pick and shovel and set off for the castle yard.

Quickly he found the elder bush, and making sure no one could see him, he began to dig. He had not dug a foot deep into the earth before his spade struck something hard. It was bright, too, and there was a jingling sound as the spade came away.

Down he went on his knees, throwing his spade aside. Eagerly he scooped out the soft earth from around the object and was at last able, with difficulty, to lift it clear of the ground.

It was an earthen pot, filled to the brim with golden coins! On the lid was a curious inscription in a language William had never

seen before. Carefully he wrapped up the crock of gold in a piece of sacking he had brought with him for the purpose. Next he filled up the hole and went quietly home.

He counted out the gold and put it in a safe and secret place. The inscription still puzzled him, however, and, hoping to find someone who could read it, without his having to explain where he found it or what it covered, he took it to the village inn. The landlord fastened it in a prominent position on the wall, and the villagers in time became used to this strange ornament.

One day, however, when William and some of his cronies were sitting in the inn parlour and talking, a tall stranger entered. He wore a wide-brimmed hat, and had a pointed, black beard. William felt sure he was a Jew, for he had such a fine Roman nose and his beard was of grizzled hair.

The stranger sat down, asked for refreshment, and, whilst this was being prepared, he glanced round the room. Suddenly, his eyes met the lid of the crock and became fixed. He rose from his seat and went over to the wall where the lid hung.

"Do any of you know where this was found?" he asked.

No one replied.

"Do you know the meaning of the writing?" he now demanded.

"No," said someone in the room. "Do you understand it, sir?"

"I do," retorted the stranger. "Listen! Gather round and I will translate it for you."

All rose up and crowded round the new-comer.

"It is a strange rhyme of two lines," he said, with his finger touching the beginning of the inscription.

Given in English it reads thus:—

"Look lower—where this stood  
Is another twice as good."

The villagers looked at each other, and then one suggested that it would be a good thing if they could find the other lid, to hang on the opposite wall! But no one seemed to know about the origin of the crock lid.

As soon as he conveniently could do so, William slipped out of the inn, ran home, and took his spade and some sacking. Off he set for the castle, and was soon working hard at the earth under the elder tree.

Down and down he dug, deeper and deeper still. At last, as his muscles began to ache

and the light of day to fade, his spade struck something hard, and the lid of the second coffer came in view.

William feverishly worked at the earth around the crock. It was a larger vessel than the first had been, and was more difficult to remove.

At last, however, as the darkness fell and the moon peeped over the horizon of the distant moors, the crock was securely wrapped in sacking and William was struggling home.

"Too late to-night," thought he. "I'll hide the crock till to-morrow and count my gold by the light of the sun."

Next morning he rose and went to the hiding place to look at his treasure. Strangely enough it was still there, and stranger still there was writing carved on the lid. William scraped off the earth that still held to the lid, and looked at the inscription.

He could not read it, but he felt a strange thrill as he realised that it was exactly the same writing as that on the lid of the first crock.

In English, it read:

"Look lower—where this stood  
Is another twice as good."

William was indeed in Fortune's favour. The next evening he went to the bush by the north-west corner of the castle yard, and dug deeper still.

He had been too tired the previous night to fill up the hole before he left. Therefore to-night's work was easy.

Ere long he came upon a crock of gold, larger and more valuable even than the second one. Somehow he managed to struggle home with the heavy, precious burden, and soon began to open the lid.

There was no inscription this time, however, so William never went digging in the castle yard again.

He thus became very rich, but no further news of him do we get from the tale that has been handed down.

It is said that other parts of our land claim this wonderful finding of gold as happening in their district, but the good folks of Upsall used to point to the castle ruins, and to the old elder tree in the north-west corner of the yard.

"That is the very place, and that the very tree," said they. And who are we that we should contradict them?



# THE LADY OF THE LAKE

HILDA A. E. ROBERTS

MANY years ago at a little farm near Llanberis, in Anglesey, there lived a young farmer. One day he was out riding on his pony. The day was hot and the pony was thirsty, so the farmer rode along to the edge of a lake, known as Llyn Coch.

The farmer did not dismount, but whilst the pony was drinking, he looked down into the lake, between the pony's ears. He could see *quite plainly* the face and shoulders of a most beautiful maiden!

At first he thought it must be the reflection of somebody standing behind him. He looked round, but there was no one near.

He jumped down from the pony, who, strangely enough, continued to drink, and did not seem to have seen anything. He beckoned to the maiden in the water and soon her head and shoulders appeared above the surface.

The farmer waded out towards her, but

just as he was about to touch her, she vanished beneath the waters of the lake.

A few moments later her head reappeared, in deeper water this time. The young man waded out until he was up to his waist in water and just as he was about to touch her, she again disappeared beneath the surface.

A third time she appeared, this time in very deep water, too deep, alas, for the young man to reach her, because he could not swim.

The sight of so lovely a face upset the farmer completely. He could not sleep at nights for thinking of her beauty, and each day he rode to the spot where he had first seen her, hoping against hope that she would come and show herself again.

Some time afterwards he was resting on the bank of the lake, eating an apple which one of his neighbours had given to him.

Suddenly the beautiful maiden appeared and looked longingly at the apple in the youth's hand. "Give me a bite of your apple," she begged, stretching out her hand.

"You can have it all, and you are welcome to it, but you must come and fetch it yourself," said the young man hoping that by saying this, he would entice the maiden out of the water.

"No, you must throw me a piece," she said. But this he refused to do.

Then, much to his delight, she approached him. He caught her firmly by the wrist and held her fast. "Let me go! Let me go!" she cried. "Father! Help me!"

Her cries brought the head and shoulders of a venerable old man to the surface of the lake. He was crowned with a garland of water-lilies.

"What ails you, my daughter?" said he.

"Can you not see? This man is holding me and will not let me go."

"Why are you holding her?" asked the old man.

"I love her. I want her to be my wife," replied the youth in halting tones.

"Very well," said the old man, "I will give her to you, if you will promise never to strike her with iron or clay."

The young man laughed.

"Why! I should never be likely to do that. I love her too fondly."

He embraced the maiden and the old man of the lake married them and gave them his blessing, there and then.

Together they went to the farmhouse and they settled down happily.

The farm was well cared for and the meals were always well-cooked. As time went on two sons and two daughters were born to them.

The eldest son became a great physician. The second became an able craftsman. There was nothing that he could not do with any kind of metal. He even made for himself a little boat out of the thinnest, finest steel to replace his own coracle of bull's hide.

The eldest daughter was wonderful at music, and it was said that she invented the small ten-stringed harp on which she played most beautifully. The other daughter invented the spinning-wheel and taught the country-people how to spin. They lived for more than forty years "right long and happilie," so the story goes, until at last one day the wife expressed a desire for one of those same apples with which her husband had tempted her out of the lake.

Off went her good husband on his horse to the neighbouring farm where they grew. His neighbour, being only too anxious to please, gave him as many apples as he could carry, and suggested to the farmer that, as his wife was so fond of those particular apples, he should take a cutting from the tree.

"Then," he said, "she will be able to have as many as she likes."

The other thanked him and returned home laden with apples, and the young apple-sapling on the saddle before him.

"See what I have brought you, wife!" he said. "Apples in plenty you shall have next year." His wife was very pleased.

"I will help you to plant it now," she said, and she held the sapling whilst the farmer fetched his spade. He began to dig.

"Is the hole deep enough yet, do you think?" he asked. "Not yet," answered his wife. Stooping low he went on digging with much energy, and quite by accident he threw the last spadeful right into his wife's face! She cried out in fear: "You have struck me with clay!"

The husband remembered well his promise to the old man of the lake, and, making up his mind that the apple tree was the cause of all the trouble, he resolved that it should be sent back at once.

He turned to fetch his horse for the journey, but like a flash it bolted. Away ran the horse, and away ran the farmer after it. His wife joined in the chase and when they had caught the horse the farmer threw the bridle,

as he thought over its head, but alas, alack! the part that had iron on it struck the wife full in the face

She burst into tears and fled down the hill. On and on she ran, her bewildered husband following. But he could not catch her, and when she came to the lake-side she plunged into the waters and was never seen nor heard of again.

# THE STRANDED MERMAID

CECILY M. RUTLEY

IN Cornwall mermaids are called "merry-  
maids," and there are many old legends  
about these beautiful maidens of the sea who,  
so folk said, were to be seen from time to time  
disporting themselves along the rocky Cornish  
coasts. They are still there, no doubt, if only  
*we* could see them.

Long ago, a merrymaid and merryman,  
and some little merrymaidens and merrymen,  
made their home in the waters around the  
Lizard peninsula. Kynance Cove was one of  
their favourite haunts, and they would often  
go into a cavern in the cove to rest in its cool  
shade.

One summer's day, when they had been  
swimming about in the sea all the morning,  
the merryman said, "Let us go to our cavern  
to escape for a time from this blazing sun."

So he and the merrymaid and their children  
all swam away to Kynance, and went into the

cool cavern. The tide was going out, and upon a heap of soft, green seaweed that lay in the cave the merryman flung himself down. "I am going to sleep," he cried. "Do not wake me until the tide comes in."

Then the merryman fell asleep, and the children stole out to play in the shallow water upon the sands, for *they* did not mind the sunshine, and were not feeling at all tired.

Their mother watched them for a little while. Then a sweet scent was wafted down to her from some flowers growing on the cliffs high above. "How lovely!" she cried. "Oh, how I should like to get nearer to those delicious scents. The children are safe enough, and their father will not wake for a long, long time." So saying, she allowed herself to float away on the water in the direction of that part of the shore whence the scent seemed to come. At last, when she reached a rock near the land, she stopped and climbed up on to it.

There was a beautiful pool of transparent water in a little hollow in the sand on the side of the rock nearest the shore, and the mermaid peered down into it. "I think I will do my hair," she said. "That pool makes a splendid looking-glass." And she began to



comb out her lovely golden hair with her comb and by passing her fingers through it. All sorts of things came tumbling out of it—bits of shell and seaweed, and even tiny crabs and other minute creatures of the sea. Such strange things always collect in mermaids' hair, you know, as they swim through the ocean.

While the mermaid was combing her hair the tide was going farther and farther out. Suddenly she looked up to see a big stretch of dry sand lying behind her between the rock and the sea. "Oh, dear! oh, dear!" she cried. "How *am* I going to get back to the water? Oh, whatever *shall* I do?"

"What is the matter, my dear?" said a human voice. "Can I help you?"

Turning round, the mermaid saw an old man standing on the shore watching her, and so frightened her that she slipped off the rock into the pool beyond.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" exclaimed the old man now. "Perhaps the pool is very deep, and the beautiful mermaid will be drowned!" and he hastened towards it to help her out. All he could see, as he gazed into the pool, was the mermaid's hair spread out all over the water

"Now don't be frightened," said the old man kindly. "I won't hurt you. Tell me how you came to be so far out of the sea."

Presently the merrymaid screwed up her courage, and climbed back out of the pool on to the rock. Sitting there in the sunshine she told the old man her tale. "And what I am going to do now," she said, when she had finished it, "I really do not know. If the merryman wakes up and finds I am not in the cavern he will be *very* angry, for it will be his dinner-time soon, and he will be hungry. If you could carry me across the sands," she added sweetly, "I would give you any three things you liked to ask for "

"I will carry you right enough," said the old man. "Just get on to my back."

Then the old man turned round with his back to the rock, and stooped down, and the merrymaid climbed on to his broad back, and flung her arms round his neck.

"Hold tight!" cried the old man, and off he went across the stretch of yellow sands.

"What do you wish me to give you?" the merrymaid asked as they went.

"Not riches," said the old man. "I do not want silver or gold. But I should like to be able to do good to my neighbours and my

friends. I should like the power, first to break the spells of witches, secondly to cure diseases, and thirdly to find out thieves and robbers, and to restore the goods they have stolen."

"All these powers you shall have," said the merrymaid. "Come the day after to-morrow to that rock," and she pointed to one which stood at a spot reached by the tide when it was half-way in and half-way out, "and I will show you how you may obtain the powers you desire. Thank you for carrying me so far."

By this time they had reached the water, and the merrymaid loosened her hands from round the old man's neck, and slid off his back into the sea. "Here is my comb," she said, taking it out of her hair and giving it to him. "When you want me, just comb the water with it, and I shall appear."

Then the merrymaid threw the old man a kiss, and swam away back to the cavern which she reached before her merryman woke.

The day after to-morrow the old man and the merrymaid met at the appointed rock, which is even still called the Mermaid's Rock. "Now listen carefully," the merrymaid said, and she first taught the old man what to do to charm away and break the spells which

witches had thrown over people or animals. Then she taught him how to cure a number of different diseases, and the value and virtue of various herbs and plants. And lastly she told him the way to prepare a bowl of water, so that if any one who had been robbed looked in it, he or she could see the face of the thief.

"That is all I think," said the mermaid when she had finished. "Now will you take me somewhere where I can watch the doings of those funny folk like yourself, who live on land and have their tails split so that they can walk on it? I do so want to see more of them, but, of course, I do not want to be seen by them"

"I'll take you," said the old man.

So the mermaid got once more on to his back, and the old man carried her out of the sea up on to the shore. Then he climbed, with the mermaid still on his back, up the side of the cliffs to the village where he lived. Hiding behind a furze rick, they watched the people coming and going, until the mermaid grew tired and said, "I have seen enough, thank you. Please take me back to the sea."

So the old man carried the mermaid back to the shore, and as she slid off his back into

the water, she said, "I am glad I am not a human. I would ever so much rather be a mermaid, and live in the beautiful sea. Now wouldn't you like to come down into the sea to my home and see how *I* live? I will make you young again if you will do so."

"No, thank you," replied the old man, shaking his head. "I prefer to stay upon the dry land. Your watery home does not appeal to me, not even if by going there I should become young again."

"Just as you like, of course," said the mermaid. "Good-bye, then!" So saying, she swam quickly away, and the old man stood and watched her until she was out of sight.

Then he went back to his village and soon became famous for his wonderful powers. People brought him their animals that had had spells cast upon them by witches, and even came themselves to have evil charms removed. Sick people flocked to him from far and near to be cured of all sorts of sicknesses and diseases. And robbers and thieves were often found out by means of his magic bowl of water.

There was no one in Cury, the village in

which the old man lived, and which in olden times was called Corantyn, so happy as he. "I am glad I did not ask the merrymaid for silver or gold," he often said. "The riches that I possess of having the power to help my neighbours are of far greater worth, and make me far happier too."

The old man of Cury kept the comb that the merrymaid had given him very carefully, and it was handed down from one generation of his family to another. Indeed, I believe it is still in the possession of the old man's descendants to-day, and it is said that they have always had greater powers than ordinary folk, ever since the day when the old man helped the stranded merrymaid.

# MEG OF MELDON

MARGARET TYNEDALE

**T**HE Lady Margaret, wife of Sir William Fenwick of Wallington, was a daughter of one William Selby, a Newcastle money-lender. Perhaps it was from him that she inherited her inordinate love of wealth, for tradition affirms that she was very keen on the money-bags. The estate of Meldon, near Morpeth, had been heavily mortgaged to her father, and this mortgage became Meg's dowry.

As so often happens with mortgages, the squire of Meldon soon had to leave his manor, which passed into the possession of Sir William Fenwick's lady. And Meg was not loved by her new tenants. Whether or not they were prejudiced against her one cannot say, but she is supposed to have ground them down to the uttermost farthing.

As virtues carried to excess are apt to become vices, so Meg's eye for business eventually turned her into a miser. She was always on the look out for any means of increasing her rapidly growing wealth. She

would buy in cattle and grain when they were going cheap, to sell again when they became dear, no matter whom she swindled in the process. But so tight was her hold on her tenants and servants, that none dared to complain openly.

Perhaps she has been maligned. But there is no doubt that she grew very rich, and when she got older she began a systematic plan of hiding bags of gold here and there about her domains.

She spent most of her time at Hartington Hall, near Rothley. And there are tales of an underground carriage-way from there to Meldon, so that she could drive backwards and forwards unobserved.

And when at length she died, and was buried—so we are told—at Newminster Abbey, her spirit was doomed to wander from hoard to hoard for seven long years. And then, after a seven years' rest, to begin the same weary round all over again, mourning for the sorrow she had caused in the amassing of her wealth. And this must go on until all had been found and put to good use. She used to cross Meldon Bridge in the form of a black dog, which on reaching the other side invariably changed into a beautiful woman. She was seen gazing sorrowfully



into the deep draw-well of Meldon Castle, where she had early hidden one of her largest stores. And few, if any, of the local people dared to go through Meldon Wood after dusk for fear of meeting her.

One night, long afterwards, a poor hind dreamt of the treasure in the well, and how he might get it out. So, without word to a soul, he went there at midnight. By the well he saw the shadowy form of the restless spirit, but he was not afraid, for she seemed anxious to help him.

He secured a stout chain to the roller by which the bucket had been lowered, and climbed carefully down, armed with grappling hooks. These he successfully made fast in the hide covering of the precious bundle, which lay on the clay bottom, for the well was now dry. Up, up, he climbed again, and then with the aid of his ghostly companion he hauled up his prize.

In dead silence they worked, for the one condition was that he must not speak a single word from the time he left his home until he returned there. But when he saw the bag of gold which would make such a difference to his life, excitement got the better of him, and he exclaimed:

"There! All the demons alive can't help me getting it now!"

But couldn't they? No sooner had he uttered the fatal words than the precious bundle slipped back into the well, there to remain for evermore!

The very last place one would think of starting a treasure hunt would be the school. Yet the boys of Meldon were to have their share of surprises. It was an old house, very old indeed, and when the scholars indulged in their usual after-dinner romp the windows rattled and the floor shook. One day, they were letting loose their high spirits with more rowdyism than ever, chasing each other under desks, over benches, round and round again; when suddenly there was a roar, a muffled thud, and they were all half-smothered with falling plaster. The ceiling had come down!

And not only the ceiling. With it had come a heavy bag, which burst as it fell, scattering gold coins in all directions. The general scramble which followed can better be imagined than described!

That must have been the last of Meg of Meldon's hoards, for her wandering spirit was never seen again.

# THE LADY OF THE FOUNTAIN

*Adapted from the Mabinogion*

## CHAPTER I

### KYNON'S STORY

THE knights of Arthur's court were telling stories while they waited for meat, and this is the story Kynon told:—

I was an only son, and my daring was very great. I felt that there was no task in all the world too mighty for me. So, one morning, I set forth on a journey to discover if any one was stronger than I.

And it chanced that as I rode I came to the fairest valley in all the world. Through this valley ran a river, and by the side of the river was a path. I followed the path till the middle of the day, and continued my journey down through the valley till the evening.

In the distance I saw a castle, in front of which stood two youths with yellow curling hair. They were clad in yellow satin and had gold clasps on their insteps.

Each of them held an ivory bow in his

hand, strung with the sinews of the stag. The shafts of their arrows were of whalebone and the arrows were winged with peacocks' feathers. They carried also daggers with blades of gold.

A little way from them I saw a man also clad in a robe and a mantle of yellow satin. Round the top of his mantle was a band of gold lace. On his feet were shoes of leather, fastened by bosses of gold. He saluted me with courtesy, and walked with me towards the castle.

No person was to be seen anywhere, until we came to the hall, and there sat four-and-twenty damsels embroidering satin at a window.

They rose as we entered, and all of them came forward to wait upon me. They placed soft cushions for me to sit upon, and brought bowls of silver so that I might wash. Then they led me to a table of silver, on which were vessels of silver and gold and horn, and I was seated beside the yellow knight.

He said not a word till I had finished eating, then he asked me who I was, adding, "Had we not feared to disturb thee, we should have talked to thee sooner; now let us begin."

I answered that I was travelling round the

world, in order to find if any one lived who could overcome me.

The knight looked at me and smiled. "If I did not fear to distress thee, I would show thee how to meet a man such as thou seekest. Sleep here to-night, but in the morning rise early and take the road through the valley.

"Enter the wood beyond and follow the path to the right, until you reach a glade with a mound in the centre.

"Thou wilt see a black giant on the top of the mound. He has one foot and but one eye, and that in the middle of his forehead. He is the head of that wood, and a thousand animals graze around him. Ask him to show thee the way to that which thou seekest."

Next morning I mounted my horse and rode straight through the valley to the glade, and there was the black giant seated alone on the top of the mound.

In his hand he held an iron club, with which he struck at a stag feeding near him, so that he began to bell loudly. Then thousands upon thousands of animals of all kinds came running into the glade, and bowed their heads lowly to the black giant.

"Seest thou, little man, what power I hold over these animals?" he demanded.

Then I asked him the way, and this seemed to vex him, for he replied crossly, "Take the path that leads to the head of the glade and ascend the wooded steep right to the top. There thou wilt find a large open space and in the midst of it a tall tree

"Under the tree is a fountain, and by the side of it is a marble slab. There stands a silver bowl attached by a chain of silver. Thou must take the bowl and with it throw water on the slab. At once a peal of thunder will break forth, followed by a shower of hailstones, so heavy that the leaves of the trees will be carried away. Then a flock of birds will come and sing so sweetly that thou wilt be cast under a spell and wilt stand gazing at them.

"But a voice will come rumbling and mumbling up through the valley towards thee, and a Black Knight will appear, riding upon a coal black horse and clothed all in black. He will charge down upon thee. If thou fleest from him he will overtake thee, and if you dost not flee, so sure as thou art a mounted knight he will leave thee on foot. Thou wilt find all the trouble in that adventure that thou wishest."

So I rode away and came to the top of the

hill, as the black giant had directed me. And I saw the tree, and beneath it a fountain, and by its side the marble slab with the silver bowl and the silver chain.

I cast a bowlful of water on the slab, and the thunder came and the hailstones fell around me. At length the sky became clear, and the birds flew down and enchanted me with their singing.

Then a voice said, "Oh, Knight, what has brought thee hither? The shower of hailstones thou hast caused to fall has killed every man and beast in my kingdom!"

Almost before the voice stopped, I saw a knight on a coal black horse come riding towards me. He was clad all in black, and charged down upon me so furiously that a moment afterwards I was thrown from my horse. The knight passed his lance through the bridle rein and rode away, leaving me where I was standing.

On my way back to the castle, I had to pass the black giant, who was sitting on the mound. When he saw me on foot he laughed so mockingly that I was filled with shame.

But the yellow man of the castle was as courteous as before. He said not a word of

my defeat, and the four-and-twenty damsels waited upon me again, and the feast that was set before me was better than on the previous night.

On the morrow I found ready for me a dark bay palfrey, so I left my blessing with all the castle and rode back. The horse that the yellow man gave me stands in the stable yonder.

Thus ended Kynon's story, and as soon as he had finished, Owain, one of the bravest of Arthur's knights, said, "I will myself go and discover this wonderful Black Knight who guards the fountain."

## CHAPTER II

### OWAIN'S ADVENTURE

OWAIN set out at dawn next morning, mounted on his charger, and travelled through distant lands. At length he came to the valley of which Kynon had spoken. He rode down the pathway by the side of the river till he came to the plain. There stood the castle, and in front of it two youths clad



in yellow satin, shooting their arrows as Kynon had seen them.

When he came to the castle the yellow man came forward and greeted him courteously. As they passed into the hall four-and-twenty damsels rose to wait upon Owain, and indeed everything happened to him as Kynon had said it would.

When he told his host that he had come in quest of the knight of the fountain the yellow man smiled.

"It would be unkind of me to point the way for thee to arrive at the fountain," he said, "if it were not that thou asketh it."

Then he spoke of the black giant, watching over the thousands of animals feeding in the glade. And the next morning Owain set off by the road pointed out to him.

When he saw the huge ugly giant, with his one eye in the middle of his forehead, and his one foot, he was even more surprised than Kynon had been. He asked the way to the fountain, and the giant told him how he should go; so Owain went riding forward, and very soon beheld the green slab and the bowl upon it.

Owain took the bowl, and filled it at the fountain, and threw the water upon the slab.

Then the thunder was heard, and the hailstones fell in such a heavy shower that Owain was bruised by them.

But in a very short time the sky became bright; the birds flew down upon the now leafless tree and sang so beautifully that Owain felt he had never heard a sweeter sound. Just then a knight, clad all in black, charged down upon him, and they began to strive against one another. They broke their lances in the first encounter, and then drew their swords, and Owain struck the Black Knight a mortal blow. Fearing that he had received his death wound, the Black Knight turned his horse's head and spurred him homewards.

Owain on his charger dashed after him, but the black horse was the quicker.

Soon they came before a vast castle, and the Black Knight was allowed to enter, but the gate was let fall as Owain passed in and it cut his horse in two. The Black Knight rode on through the inner gate, and it, too, closed after him quickly. So Owain was shut between the two gates. If he called out or shook the gates the wounded knight's servants would come and kill him. He did not know what to do. He peeped through the inner

gateway and saw that it led into a village street. On the farther side was a maiden, clad in yellow satin, walking towards the gate.

When she was close to it she asked Owain to open it, but he told her that he could not.

"That is truly sad," said she, "for thou seemest a fair and honest knight.

"Take this ring and put it on thy finger, with the stone towards the inside of thy hand, and close thy hand on the stone. So long as thou hidest the ring, it will hide thee. When the men come to fetch thee, to put thee to death, thou mayest pass through the gateway unseen. I will wait for thee at the horse-block, and do thou come and place a hand on my shoulder. I will lead thee to safety."

Then she went away, and men came from the castle to put Owain to death, but he hid the ring and passed unseen through the gate. When he reached the maiden he put a hand on her shoulder, and she led him to a fine room covered with gold and beautiful paintings. Here Owain lodged all night, and the maiden, who was called Luned, brought him the very finest of food.

Next day there was loud sorrow and weeping in the castle, for the Black Knight had died of his wounds.

Owain looked out from his window and saw thousands of men and women in the streets fully armed, following each other in a long procession. Last in the train was a lady wearing a dress of yellow satin, with golden hair falling over her shoulders. She was crying bitterly and wringing her hands in sorrow.

Owain felt sorry that one so beautiful should suffer so. He asked Luned to tell him who the lady was, and Luned answered, "She is one of the fairest and the most noble of women. She is my mistress, the Lady of the Fountain, the wife of the Black Knight."

And Owain said, "I should be glad to defend her with my life. She is the fairest of women."

"I will speak of thee to her as soon as I may," said the damsel; "but in the meantime thou must keep out of sight."

When Luned reached the castle she found the Lady of the Fountain overcome with grief, and said to her, "Is it well for thee to mourn so after that good man?"

At this the Lady of the Fountain became angry and bade her go from the chamber.

But Luned said, "Thou knowest that it is impossible for thee to keep this castle from

thine enemies. Thou must take another husband; one, who is strong enough to defend the fountain; permit me to go to Arthur's court and return with a knight who is brave and strong enough to defend thee."

"Go," said the Lady of the Fountain, "and show proof of thy words."

Luned set out, pretending that she was going to Arthur's court, but she only went to a distant part of the grounds of the castle. There she hid for as long as it might have taken her to ride to the court of King Arthur.

At the end of that time she dressed carefully and went to her mistress, who asked what news she had from Arthur's court.

Luned said, "A chieftain has come hither with me, who will tell thee all the news. He has come to offer to defend thee!"

"Bring him to visit me to-morrow," said the Lady of the Fountain.

On the next day Luned brought Owain to the chamber of the lady. "Luned," said she, "this knight has not the look of a man who has ridden from Arthur's court."

"What harm is there in that, lady?" asked Luned.

"I am certain that this is the man who killed my lord."

"He is the stronger knight," replied Luned.

"Go back to thy house," said the lady, "and I will take counsel."

Next day the Lady of the Fountain called all her chief advisers to her. She pointed out that she could keep her earldom only if she had a strong defender.

Then she asked:—

"Shall I choose a man from my own people, or a stranger?"

The counsellors replied that she would be wiser to choose a knight who did not belong to her own kingdom. So next day she sent for the bishops, and Owain was made her husband.

And for three years Owain defended the fountain and the kingdom of the Lady of the Fountain, and he was loved by all who knew him.

But all this time the knights of Arthur's court knew not where he had gone.

## CHAPTER III

## ARTHUR SEEKS OWAIN

ONE day Arthur was riding beside a knight of his court when he said sadly, "I am in great grief about Owain, whom I have lost these three years."

Then the knight said, "Let us avenge Owain, if he be slain; or set him free, if he be in prison; and bring him back if he be alive."

Then Arthur and the men of his house set forth to seek Owain, with Kynon as their guide. And Arthur came to the castle at which both Kynon and Owain had stayed. There were the two youths shooting in the same place and the yellow man standing by.

When the yellow man saw Arthur he invited him to the castle, and Arthur went in with all his knights. So vast was the building that, although so many, the visitors were scarcely seen. The four-and-twenty damsels rose up to wait upon them, and the pages took charge of their horses.

The next morning Arthur set out with all

his knights, and Kynon guided them to the place where the black giant kept watch.

Arthur was surprised at the giant's height and ugliness. After they had spoken with him, they rode forward to the top of the wooded steep and went down through the valley, till they reached the green tree. Beside the tree was the fountain and the bowl and the slab.

Kai begged leave of Arthur to throw a bowlful of water on the slab. Then a thunderstorm broke, and the men of Arthur's train were nearly killed by the shower of hail that followed.

After the shower, the sky became clearer, and showed that the tree had lost all its leaves.

Then a knight, riding on a coal black horse and clad in black satin, came riding towards them. Kai entered into combat with him, but in a short time he was overthrown.

That night Arthur encamped near the fountain, and next morning Kai again fought the Black Knight, but he was unhorsed once more.

One after the other the men who were with Arthur went out to challenge the strange knight, but he was stronger than all of them, excepting Gawain.



On the first day that Gawain fought with him neither gained the victory. On the next day they fought again, but once more both were equal. On the third day they became angry and fought more furiously. Their horses came together with such a shock that both animals were injured and their riders thrown. So the two men met on foot, but, for a long time, neither could gain any victory. At last the Black Knight gave Gawain a blow that threw off his helmet. And when he saw his face he cried out, "My lord Gawain, I did not know thee. Take my sword and my arms." Then said Gawain, "Thou, Owain, art the victor, take thou my sword."

But neither of them would take the other's sword.

So Arthur said, "Give me your weapons; then neither has gained the victory over the other."

So they all embraced Owain, and when each one had greeted him they encamped for the night. On the next morning Owain said to Arthur, "It is three years since I left the court, and during these years I have been preparing a banquet for thee, for I knew that thou wouldest come to seek me."

And they all went to the castle of the Countess of the Fountain, and the banquet was placed before them.

On the morrow Arthur prepared to depart, but he begged the Countess that she would permit Owain to go with him for the space of three months. The Countess agreed, though it hurt her sorely, and Arthur came to the island of Britain. But, when Owain found himself amongst his friends, he stayed three years instead of three months.

## CHAPTER IV

### OWAIN WANDERS IN THE DESERT

ONE day, as Owain sat at meat in Arthur's city, a damsel entered riding on a bay horse. And all the trappings of the horse were of gold.

The damsel, who wore a dress of yellow satin, went up to Owain and took the ring off his hand. "Thus," said she in scorn, "shall be treated the faithless." Then she turned her horse's head and went away.

Owain was very sorrowful, for only then

did he remember the Lady of the Fountain, and that he had left her for three years.

Then he went to his lodgings and prepared to depart. Next day he set out, and, after he had ridden for many miles, he lost his way among strange mountains. His clothing became worn to shreds, his body wasted away, and his hair grew long and coarse.

He went about with the wild beasts and fed with them, until they became his friends. But at last he grew so weak that he could no longer go with them, and he went down the hills into the valley below—the fairest valley in the world.

One day the Countess, who owned that land, and her maidens were walking by a lake in the middle of the park, and they saw the form of a man. They went near and touched him, but he was faint from the heat of the sun and did not notice them.

The Countess bade one of her maidens bring a horse and clothes and place them not far from him. Then, giving the maiden a box of balsam, she bade her rub it over the stranger's heart. The maiden did as she was told, and then hid in a thicket.

In a short time the stranger opened his eyes, and when he became fully awake he was

ashamed of his torn clothes. He crept up to the horse and lifted the garments and put them on with care. Then he mounted the horse and the maiden bowed to him.

He asked whose land he was upon, and she said, "A widowed Countess owns the castle. Formerly she had two earldoms, but at the present time she has only half of all her wealth left. The rest has been taken from her by a neighbouring Earl, because she refuses to become his wife."

The maiden returned to the Countess, who told her to see that the stranger wanted for nothing. So Owain was tended with great care, and in three months he grew strong again.

One day he heard a tumult, and was told that the Earl had come to the castle with a huge army, hoping to take all the lands of the Countess. So Owain asked for a horse and arms, and when the Countess heard of this she laughed. But she sent him a black horse and suits of armour for horse and man.

Then Owain went out by the gates and met the Earl and unhorsed him, and brought him prisoner to the Countess. On the next day the Earl promised to give back all that he had taken from her. As a ransom for his own life,

he gave her half of his own kingdom and all his gold and silver and jewels.

Now the Countess and her subjects begged Owain to remain, but he chose to go wandering through distant lands and deserts.

One day he found himself close to a craggy mound in the middle of a wood. In the mound was a gray rock. Within a cleft of the rock was a serpent, and near the rock lay a black lion, and every time the lion moved the serpent darted out to attack him.

So Owain drew his sword and cut the serpent in two, and then walked on but the lion ran after him and played about him like a dog. And when it was time for Owain to camp, the lion brought him a roebuck, and both he and the lion made their supper from it.

While they sat there, Owain heard a sigh, and on his asking whence it came, a voice said, "I am Luned, maiden to the Lady of the Fountain. I have been shut up in this stone vault because Owain, the knight who defended the Lady of the Fountain, has gone away. Two of the pages called him faithless, and I told them that they were not a match for him. So they have shut me up here, and

if Owain does not return on a certain day to rescue me I am to be put to death."

Owain asked if there was any place where he could spend the night, and Iuned replied, "There is, lord. Go along the side of yonder river, and in a short time thou wilt see a castle in which are many towers, and the Earl who owns that castle is the most hospitable man in the world. Thou mayest spend the night there."

So Owain went to the Earl's castle, and the lion, who went with him, lay down in the stable. But when Owain went to meat, the lion came and lay down close by him under the table.

Now Owain was struck by the sadness of the people in that castle. When they sat at meat he said, "Behold it is time for us to be cheerful."

"Heaven knows," said the Earl, "that we have cause enough for sadness and care. Two of my sons have been killed by a monster in the mountains. To-morrow that monster will come here, and unless I give him my daughter, he will slay my other sons before my eyes. He is in the form of a man, but is no less than a giant."

Next morning when the giant was heard

coming, Owain went forth to meet him, and the lion rushed out too, and they began to fight side by side.

Then the giant said, "I could overcome thee were it not for this lion."

Then Owain led the lion back to the castle, shut the gates upon it, and went to fight the giant alone.

The lion kept roaring loudly, and after a time he began to climb, till he reached first the top of the hall and then the top of the castle. At last he sprang down from the walls and rushed to Owain's side. With a mighty stroke of his paw he threw the giant to the ground dead.

Owain now left the Earl's castle and went back to the place where Luned was. But, as he came near it, he saw two youths leading forth the maiden to be burned.

So Owain spurred his horse and rode forward and asked the youths, "By what right do you do this?"

So they said, "If Owain did not return to rescue this maiden on this day, it was agreed between us that she should be burned."

So Owain said, "I will do battle with thee." But the lion stayed by Owain's side and fought the youths with him, till they said,

"Chieftain, it was not agreed, and it is not proper that we should fight with this lion."

So Owain took the lion and shut him up in the dungeon where Luned had been; but the lion burst through the wall with a loud roar, and, rushing upon the two men, slew them both, so Luned was saved from being burned.

And Owain went back with Luned to the castle of the Lady of the Fountain, and he asked the Lady to go with him to the court of Arthur. They took the road that led to the land of the black giant. And Owain fought with the giant and overcame him and bound his hands behind his back.

But the giant begged for his life, saying, "My lord Owain, I was a robber here and my house was a house of spoil, but do thou spare my life and I will make of my castle a hospice for the weak, as long as I live." Owain agreed to this and left him on this promise.

And he rode back to Arthur's court with the Lady of the Fountain, and there they both lived beloved by all.



# THE PIXIES AND THE TULIPS

CECILY M. RUTLEY

THERE once lived in a little cottage in Devonshire an old woman who was very fond of her garden. Although it was only a tiny plot of ground, she tended it with loving care, and the great joy of her heart was a bed of tulips. In all the cottage gardens in the village there were no tulips that were quite so fine as hers.

One night, after the old woman had gone to bed, and to sleep, she woke. All was dark and quiet indoors, but through the open window there came floating strains of the most beautiful music.

"Where can it come from?" cried the old woman, and getting out of bed she went to the window and looked out.

Down in the little garden beneath her the tulips were gently waving their lovely heads to and fro in the soft breezes of the night, and the same beautiful music came floating up to the old woman's ears.

"It is coming from the tulips!" she exclaimed at last. "I am *sure* it is. How wonderful! And I expect there are pixies, too."

Now, if only the old woman could have seen it she would have beheld a most marvellous sight. Hidden away in the middle of each tulip was a tiny elfin baby, and sitting on the petals of the flowers, standing on the ground beneath, and fluttering in the air just above them, were the mothers, lovely little pixies all dressed in green, who were singing their babies to sleep with the sweetest lullabies.

Presently the music stopped, and as it did not begin again the old woman went back to her bed. The melodies had ceased because all the babies were at last asleep, and their mothers had flown into the field just beyond the garden to enjoy some frolics on their own account.

Day was just beginning to break when the old woman woke again. "If only I could see them!" she cried—meaning, of course, the pixies! and she jumped out of bed and went again to the window.

This time no sweet music came floating up to her, but as she listened intently she heard

another sound. It was the sound of gentle kissing going on amongst her tulips, mingled with faint cooings, and delightful little gurglings of delight. "The pixies are kissing one another," the old woman said.

She was partly right, but not quite. The pixy mothers had stopped dancing as soon as the first faint glimmer of dawn had come stealing into the sky, and now they had come back to the garden to fetch their babies. And as they lifted them from their tulip cradles they kissed and caressed them, and the tiny elfin-babies were answering in the cooing, gurgling language of their own.

As soon as she was dressed the old woman went out into her garden. The fairy sounds had stopped, and although she looked and listened with all her might there were no signs of the pixies to be seen or heard. Then she went into the field, and there on the grass she saw the rings that had been made by the tiny feet of the little creatures as they danced.

"Yes, it was pixies right enough!" she said.

After that the old woman lavished more care upon her tulip bed than she had even done before, and every night she woke to hear the sweet strains of the pixy music being wafted up to her. Then one morning, to her

great amazement and delight, she discovered that from her tulips came a scent as fragrant as the scent of roses. "I have never heard of tulips having such a scent before!" she cried. "Good little pixies. Thank you! What can I do for *you*?"

"I will never pluck a single tulip," the old woman said. And she never did. Neither would she allow any one else who came into her garden to so much as touch one of the precious blossoms. "They belong to the pixies," she said. "They must be kept *only* for them." And the pixies were so pleased at the old woman's kindly thought for them, and so delighted to have such safe and lovely cradles where their babies could repose while they danced at night, that they used their magic power to make the tulips last longer than any of the other flowers in that garden.

# THE CHANGING OF GRIFFITH

HILDA A. E. ROBERTS

**I**N the parish of Llanfabon, near the eastern border of Glamorganshire, there is a shady hollow known as Pant-y-Dawns. It was called by this name because the old folks said that the fairies used to come and dance there. The fairies were called Bendith-y-Mamau by the people of that district.

Near to the Pant-y-Dawns, there was a small farmhouse, in which lived, many years ago, a farmer, his wife, and their baby son, Griffith.

When the farmer died, the little boy, Griffith, became the joy of his widowed mother's heart.

One day, when the child was sleeping in his cradle, the mother heard a strange, moaning noise outside. It seemed to come from the cow-shed. Fearing lest anything was wrong with one of the cows, she ran, in her fright, out to the shed, forgetting to shut the kitchen door behind her.

When she came back, great was her grief at finding the cradle empty! Little Griffith, the only joy she had left in the world, was gone.

She was frantic. She ran to the neighbours and told them.

"It must be those old 'Bendith-y-Mamau' that have taken him, sure enough," said they.

They searched high and low for the child but all in vain. He was nowhere to be found.

Just before sunset, a tiny lad appeared, standing at the woman's side.

"Mother!" he said, quite plainly.

She looked at him and looked long.

"But you are not my child. No, indeed, you are not," she said.

"Truly I am," said the little one.

"No, you are not."

"Yes, indeed, I am."

But the mother knew that it was not her own child and she felt very unhappy. For a year and a day he remained with her, following her about the house and never leaving her side for long.

He seemed to become uglier every day, and he did not grow at all.

At last, the poor woman made up her mind to go and visit a "Dyn Cynnil" or "Wise

Man," and ask his advice. One of these men, well versed in the ways of the fairies, was living at that time in the neighbourhood of Castele-y-Nos, "Castle of the Night."

Accordingly she went to him, but she did not take the child with her. When she had told the "Wise Man" all she knew, he said:—

"Sure enough, it is a 'crimbil,' a 'changeling,' you have got. You may be sure that your own child is with those old 'Bendith,' somewhere." How the mother's heart ached when she heard this!

"Now you do exactly as I tell you and all will be well. Your own child will be returned to you soon. About noon to-morrow, take an egg and cut it through the middle. Throw away one half of it but keep the other. Then mix the egg backwards and forwards in the shell.

"See that the little boy is watching you but do not call out to make him take notice. Pretend you are not watching him. If he is a changeling he will be sure to notice and to ask you what you are doing. Then come again to me, at set of sun, and let me know what he says."

"Thank you! Thank you!" said the poor widow, and away she went to her home.

She could hardly bear to look at the child. Next day, at noon, she did exactly as the Wise Man had told her.

She cut the egg in half, threw away one half and kept the other. She mixed that one backwards and forwards in the shell.

The little fellow came and stood by her side, watching her closely.

"What are you doing, mother?" he asked. "I am only mixing a pastry for the reapers' dinner, my child."

"Oh, mixing a pastry, are you? I heard it from my father, and he heard it from his father, and *he* from his father, that an acorn was before an oak, and that the oak was in the earth. But never did I hear of a reaper's dinner being mixed in an egg-shell."

His little face seemed to grow uglier than ever as he said this.

That night, at sunset, back went the woman to the abode of the "Wise Man," at Castell-y-Nos. She told him just what the little boy had said and she also remarked that he had seemed to grow much uglier as he spoke.

"Ah! It is as I thought. He does belong to these old 'Bendith' after all. Now this is what you are to do. When next the moon is



at the full, go to the place where the four roads meet at 'Rhyd-y-Gloch,' the 'Ford of the Bell.'

"Hide yourself there, at midnight, in the hedge, where you can see the crossing of the four roads, but where you, yourself, cannot be seen. Do not stir hand or foot whatever sights you see, whatever sounds you hear. More than likely you will see a sight that will make the hair rise on your head and your anger will be roused, but be sure to do as I say. Stir neither hand nor foot nor show yourself, or it will be the worse for you, and you will never get your son back from them again."

Again the woman thanked the "Wise Man" and went back to her home. She was full of impatience for the time of the full moon to come.

Now, of course, she could not bear the sight of the changeling child. He seemed to hang about her skirts more closely than ever, as though he could not bear to be parted from her.

At last the time came—midnight, and the moon at the full!

Quietly she crept up to the place where the four roads met, her heart beating loudly

in her breast. She hid herself behind some bushes where she could see all, but where she herself could not be seen.

For what seemed hours to her, she waited, straining her eyes to see and her ears to hear. At last, she heard sounds of sweet music, now soft and low, now loud and clear. It seemed to be coming nearer and nearer along the upper road

Soon it was quite close at hand. It came from a procession of Bendith-y-Mamau. There seemed to be hundreds of them. Suddenly her blood seemed to run cold in the veins. For there, in the middle of the procession, being carried by four of the little people, was Griffith, her long-lost child! What could she do?

She was just on the point of rushing out of her hiding-place when she remembered the advice of the "Wise Man."

"Do not move hand or foot," he had said, "whatever sights you see, or you will never get your beloved child back again."

So she stayed quite still, moving neither hand nor foot, hard though it was for her to do so, until the procession had vanished from sight and the sounds of music had died away.

That night she spent in walking about

outside her house-door for she felt that she could not keep her hands away from the ugly, little changeling boy.

At dawn she went again to the "Wise Man" and told him all that she had seen at the crossing of the four roads. She was overcome with grief.

"It is as I thought," said the "Wise Man." Then he took down a black book and he looked long at it, muttering to himself the while.

Then he gave her what seemed, to her, very strange advice.

"Find," said he, "a black hen. All black it must be, without a single white or red or brown or speckled feather on its back. Bake it before a fire, feathers on it and all, just as it is. Leave the kitchen door open but block up any other openings. Look into the fire. Do not look behind you at the changeling child, until the feathers have fallen off the hen, every single one. Then you can turn and look behind you."

The good woman hurried home and began to search in her pen for an all-black hen. But there was not one there. There were six black hens, but each of them had feathers of a different colour, here and there, upon their

backs. "I will go over to the next farm and look there," she said. And so she did. Again she was disappointed. She went over to another farm. They had not got one there either. All day long she searched and always in vain.

At last, just as she was giving up the search in despair, a black hen ran out from beneath a hedge and crossed her path. She did not stop to ask from whence it had come. She seized it and bore it joyfully home.

Then she killed it and set it to bake, feathers on it and all, before the fire.

Starving into the flames, she seemed to lose herself. Her eyes became fixed.

She did not turn to look behind her.

Sweet music began to fill the air. Presently the feathers began to drop off the hen, one by one, until they were all gone.

She turned round and her eyes sought the ugly little changeling child.

But he had vanished! She jumped to her feet and ran to the outer door.

"Mother! Mother!" she heard. And oh! the sound of that little voice was like sweetest music to her ears for it was the voice of Griffith, her long-lost son.

She clasped him to her, weeping for joy.

“Oh! My son! My son! Never will I let you go again. But where have you been and what have you been doing Thin you are and pale, fy anwyl! What have they done to you?”

But all the little boy could say was “Music, Mam, music!”

Great were the rejoicings in the village that day, you may be sure, but the greatest joy of all was in that mother’s heart.

# THE STORY OF TAMARA

CECILY M. RUTLEY

LONG, long ago, in a cavern under the ground in Devonshire, the beautiful nymph, Tamara, was born. Her father and mother were spirits of the earth, and loved the darkness and gloom of their underground home. But Tamara was different. The older she grew the more she loved to leave the cavern, and find her way up to the light and sunshine of the earth above.

At this her parents were sorely distressed. "Some day, Tamara," they were continually saying to her, "some evil will befall you, if you will leave your safe dark home, and venture up to the dangers that lurk upon the earth."

"I fear no dangers!" Tamara always replied. "All I long for is sunshine and light, the singing of the birds, and the sight and scent of the trees and flowers."

Now in those days many giants lived upon Dartmoor, that grim and desolate waste.

Two of them had sons named Tavy and Tawrage, and when in their wanderings these young giants chanced to see the beautiful Tamara when she was visiting the earth, each fell in love with her, and longed to win her for his bride.

"Will you marry me, Tamara?" asked Tavy, when one day he came upon Tamara sitting basking in the sunshine on a rock.

Up sprang Tamara, and with a merry laugh she sped swiftly away, up hill and down, with Tavy following after her. But he could not catch her, and when at last Tamara was tired of the fun she suddenly disappeared down into the earth.

Another day it was Tawrage who found her. "Will you marry me, Tamara?" he asked. "I will make you very happy if you will."

Up jumped Tamara with never a word, and sped away across the moors, first going one way, then another, with Tawrage always just behind her, but never quite able to catch her up. And presently, when she had had enough of frolicking, she vanished into the earth.

Day after day the same thing happened. Sometimes it was the young giant, Tavy, at others, Tawrage, whom Tamara led a wild but hopeless chase over mountain and moor.

But one morning they both found her together sitting under a bush in Morewinstow in North Cornwall by the sea.

"You shall not escape to-day, Tamara," the young giants cried, "until you have said you will marry one of us! Now, which one shall it be?"

Tamara looked at both of them and laughed a merry laugh. "I really do not know," she said. "I like you both, but I do not know that I want to marry yet at all."

"If you become the wife of a Dartmoor giant, Tamara," Tavy said, "you will never again have to go down beneath the earth to live! It must be very gloomy there."

"You will *always* be able to live in light and warmth and sunshine, Tamara!" Tawrage said.

"Yes, I know," replied Tamara. "But I cannot make up my mind."

Now Tamara had been so long absent from her home that day that at last her father said, "I fear some harm has befallen our daughter. She has never stayed up on the earth for quite so long a time before."

"No!" said her mother. "She never has. I, too, am fearful. Let us go up and see."

So the two earth spirits left their cavern



and went up to the earth above. When they first came out into the sunlight they were almost blinded, for they did not love it like Tamara, and seldom left the darkness of the earth. But at last they became accustomed to the brilliance, and started on their search.

"Tamara, Tamara! Where are you?" they cried, as they wandered to and fro upon the earth.

At last they found her at Morewinstow, sitting on the ground with Tavy and Tawrage on either side of her.

"What are you doing here, Tamara?" her father cried. "Come home with us at once." He was very angry, for he hated these two young giants, perhaps for one reason because they were so big, while he, being only a gnome, was very small.

"Yes! Come home with us at once!" Tamara's mother cried.

But Tamara would not move. "I do not wish to come," she said. "I am much happier out here in the sunshine than down in the gloomy old earth. Oh! What have you done to them?" she cried, starting up in dismay, for Tavy and Tawrage had suddenly fallen fast asleep.

"Leave them alone. You cannot wake

them, Tamara," her father said. "I have cast a spell upon them, and they will sleep for quite a long time now. Now come back with us without more delay," and he caught hold of Tamara's hands.

But Tamara dragged her hands away. "I am *not* coming back with you!" she cried. "I am *never* going back beneath the earth again! I am going to stay here with Tavy and Tawrage, both of whom are very fond of me. As you have sent them to sleep I shall wait beside them till they wake."

Then her mother tried to persuade her. But all in vain. Neither threats nor persuasion had any effect upon Tamara. "It is no use," her mother said at last. "Tamara will not change her mind."

"Anyway she shall not stay upon the earth as a nymph!" her father cried in wrath. "You shall be a river, my daughter, Tamara," he said, "and for ever and for ever you shall flow on and on to the sea."

Then, before his wife could stop him, he had pronounced some magic words, and in a few moments the beautiful nymph, Tamara, had dissolved in crystal tears, and as a stream of crystal water she began to glide away towards the sea.

Then her father and mother returned to their home, and the two giants finished their lengthy sleep.

Tavy was the first to wake. Sitting up he rubbed his eyes and looked around him. Where was he? What had he been doing when he fell asleep? Ah, yes! He remembered now. The lovely nymph, Tamara, had been sitting by his side, and he and Tawrage had been asking her to marry one of them. Tawrage was still there, fast asleep, the lazy fellow. But where was Tamara? She had gone!

"Tamara, Tamara! Where are you? Come back, come back!" cried Tavy. But though he searched all around, and called and shouted until he had hardly any voice left, he could not find her. All that he could see was a little stream that he had not noticed before. But he did not pay much heed to that. There are so many streams in Devonshire.

Tired out at last Tavy went home to his father who lived amongst the hills. "Tamara has gone! I cannot find her anywhere!" he cried.

Now the giant, Tavy's father, had seen Tamara being changed into the stream. "Alas! You will never see her again, my son," he said. "But forget all about her. Surely

there are other nymphs as fair as she for you to wed."

"There is none as fair as my Tamara," Tavy cried. "I can never forget her, and I shall never love any one else as I love her. Tell me, my father, oh! tell me quickly what has happened to her."

When his father told him Tavy's grief was great. "Life without Tamara will not be worth living," he cried. "Oh, turn me into a stream, too, so that I may flow along with her!"

Then his father turned Tavy into a stream, and away he went rushing over the rocks, down the sides of the hills, through the valleys seeking for Tamara. Presently he was flowing along joyously by her side. And when at last they neared the sea, he joined his waters to hers, and they flowed together into it.

And if you visit Devonshire to-day you will still find Tamara—Tamar the river is called—and Tavy flowing along like that. The Tamar rises on the heights just above Morewinstow, and divides Cornwall from Devonshire, as it flows south to Plymouth, and Tavy joins it at Warleigh Point which is quite close to the sea.

Later Tawrage woke. Both Tamara and Tavy had gone. "Where are they?" he cried. "Has Tamara run off with Tavy after all?" Then he saw the stream of water. "That is you, Tamara, I believe!" he cried. "You have been changed into a stream by some magic power, now, have you not?"

The only answer he received was the sound of the water gently rippling along. But Tawrage was satisfied. "Then I will be changed into water, too, and flow along with you," he said. "No power on earth will be able to part us then."

Then up leapt Tawrage, and hastened away to an enchanter he knew whose home was in the hills. "Change me into a stream of water, please!" he cried.

"Why such a strange request?" the enchanter asked.

"The lovely nymph, Tamara, has been changed into a river," said Tawrage. "If I am changed into one also I shall be able to flow to her."

Then the enchanter cast a spell upon Tawrage, and the young giant was changed into a river, and went flowing joyously away. But, alas! he mistook the way that Tamara

had gone, and went flowing on in quite a different direction.

Tawrage never found Tamara. As the River Taw he is still flowing through Devonshire. But he goes northward and enters the sea in Bideford Bay, while Tamara and Tavy flow to the south."

# THE LAND OF THE FAIRIES

HILDA A. E. ROBERTS

**H**AVE you ever wondered where the "Land of the Fairies" lies? The old folks of North Wales used to say that it was not far from Beddgelert. It stretched along the slope of the mountain called Drws-y-Coed, from Cwm Hafod Ruffydd as far as Llyn-y-Dywarchen. Many years ago all this land was said to be inhabited by the fairies or the Tylwyth Teg as they were called in Welsh.

Night after night the people in the surrounding country-side would be kept awake for hours with the sounds of their merry shouting and singing.

At the top of the mountain there was a farm known as "Upper Drws-y-Coed" and a young and handsome farmer lived there. He was fond of watching the Tylwyth Teg whilst they were holding their revels.

Now one evening on the shores of Llyn-y-Dywarchen, the young farmer was sitting enjoying the peace of the evening after the

day's hard toil, when he suddenly beheld a little group of fairies.

One of them was so beautiful that his eye singled her out from all the others. Her movements were so graceful, her voice was so sweet, that the young farmer fell in love with her at first sight.

Never heeding the consequences, he rushed in amongst the dancers and, picking up the little lady in his arms, he ran with her back to the house and bolted the door.

The other fairies were greatly alarmed when they saw that one of their sisters had been carried off, and excitedly they ran in pursuit of the farmer.

But when they arrived at the door they were baffled. The door had been bolted with an iron bolt and the fairies are afraid of iron. The young man, of course, knew about this fear, for it was common talk amongst the country-folk at that time.

The fairies turned sadly away and no longer did they hold their revels in that neighbourhood.

But let us return to the farmer who had caught the fairy. He tried his hardest to make her promise to be his wife, but each time he asked her, she refused.



Seeing that escape was impossible, she at last consented to be his wife if he could guess her name. In the meantime she said she would be willing to be his servant and do the work of the house.

This she did for some time and all went very well. Never had the farmer's house been so well cared for. Never had his meals been so well prepared. He tried and tried to find out her name but he could only think of all the common ones, such as belonged to the girls of the district, and to each of these the fairy answered "No."

At last, when he was returning from the market place in Carnarvon, one evening, he happened to pass near a field from which turf had been freshly cut. There, in the middle of it, were several of the Tylwyth Teg chattering in an excited way.

"I wonder whether they are planning to take away my loved one," he thought. "I will creep along in yonder ditch and see if I can hear what they are talking about."

This was easily done, for it was a summer's night and the ditch was dry. Creeping along on his hands and knees he was soon within earshot of the fairy crowd and he listened. One of them was crying pitifully:

"Oh, Penelop! Oh, Penelop! Why did you let that mortal carry you away?"

"Ah!" thought the young man, "Penelop must be the name I am trying so hard to find. I'll go back and ask her. If it really is her name, then my bride she shall be, and that right soon."

He crept away from the turf patch, unseen by the fairies, and away he went home. He unlocked his door and stood upon the threshold.

"Come hither, Penelop, my loved one!"

She came towards him, greatly wondering. "Who has told you my name? Some one has betrayed me," she sighed. He told her how he had found it out, and, clasping her tiny hands, she repeated softly: "Ah! My fate! My fate!"

She did not seem to be unhappy. In fact, she was quite resigned to her fate and consented to become the farmer's wife, but on one condition—that he would never strike her with iron. The young man readily agreed. He could not imagine for one moment that he would ever do such a thing.

They were married quietly, because the fairy folk do not like to make a great fuss

about a wedding, and for many years all went well.

Two children were born to them, a boy and a girl, and they had beautiful features and fine, fair complexions just like those of their fairy mother.

One morning the father was getting ready to go to Carnarvon fair. He intended to take with him a young filly which he wanted to sell at the fair. But the filly was wild and difficult to catch, and after the farmer had run three times round the field after it, he called out to his wife to come and help him.

"Penelop! Penelop! Come and help me. I cannot catch this filly and I shall be late at the fair."

So she ran out into the meadow and just as they had managed, between them, to get the filly into a corner of the field, the farmer pitched the bridle over the filly's neck.

Unhappy man that he was! He struck his wife, by accident, with the iron bit. And that was the one thing he had promised never to do!

She vanished at once and he never saw her again. But one cold and frosty night in the middle of winter he was aroused from out of a deep sleep by a gentle tapping on the

window pane. Distinctly he heard the gentle voice of his vanished wife sighing:—

“Lest my son should find it cold  
Place on him his father’s coat;  
Lest my fair one finds it cold  
Place on her my petticoat.”

It is said that the descendants of these two children still live in that neighbourhood, and they can be easily recognised by their fair and delicate complexions!

## ULPH'S HORN

JOHN R. CROSSLAND

THERE is preserved in York Minster a long drinking-horn which is very probably part of the tusk of an elephant. It is some three feet in length, and when it came at first into the possession of the Minster, it was most beautifully decorated with gold, modelled in ancient designs. During the time of Cromwell, however, after the Civil War, the destructive agents of the Lord Protector, in ransacking the stately Minster and destroying its decorations, tore off the gold and left the bare horn. Later, after the Restoration of the Monarchy, the horn was re-decorated with silver gilt. There is a legend concerning the horn, and here it is.

When the Danes were in England, and were the ruling power in the north, there was a certain sub-king of the kingdom of Deira named Ulph, or Ulphus. He had four sons who had all been trained in the art of war, and the eldest would naturally follow his father as sub-king of the province.

It happened, however, that in one of the many skirmishes that continually occurred in this troublous region, the eldest son Adelbert was killed. Ulph mourned for his son, but took consolation in the fact that three more lusty fellows yet remained to him, and the eldest of these would be able to rule in his stead when his term of life was over.

Now Ulph was a man of great strength and bravery. He was, moreover, an upright man, who loved honesty of purpose and devotion to duty. His son Adelbert had left an orphan child, a sweet little girl, by name Adelwynne, and Ulph had taken his grandchild into his home to bring her up in comfort and happiness as befitted a princess. He would walk round the castle grounds with the girl, and loved to have her company and hear her prattle more than anything life held for him.

One day they were strolling round the grounds, happy in each other's company—for Ulph was indeed a father to the child—when, in the course of their conversation the king said:

“Thou art very sweet, Adelwynne. Thine eyes are blue like unto those of my dead wife, thy grandmother the queen Helena. I do wish, however, that thou wert a boy!”

"Why should you wish that, dear grandfather?" replied the girl. "If I had been a boy perhaps I should have caused you more trouble than ever can be caused by a mere girl. Look, I might have been timid in war, and dubbed a coward by my followers. Again, I might have been a tyrant, hated by all the countryside. No, dear grandfather, it is best I am a girl."

"Perchance thou art right. Thou art young but thy tongue speaks great wisdom," murmured Ulph, as he placed his arm tenderly round her shoulders. "Let us walk on."

They strolled along awhile, until they came to an arbour under the palace wall, where Adelwynne often sat during the sunny summer days. She ran on before the king, to take her seat in the shade and prepare a place for her grandfather.

Ulph watched her lovingly as her light feet sped across the grass. Then, as she came abreast of the arbour, he saw her stop, place her hand before her eyes, and stand still, as though she had seen something which had given her a shock. He hurried to the arbour and the sight that met his gaze was one which filled him with great anger. There lay his second son, Kerdic, who was his heir. He was

in a drunken sleep, and an overturned goblet by his side told its silent tale.

In a great passion Ulph strode up to the sleeping prince and stirred him roughly with his foot.

"Is this beast a son of mine?" he cried, but the prince made no sign that he had heard, for he was deep in wine.

"Get up, thou drunken sluggard," cried the king, but Kerdic never heard the command.

"And thinkest thou that thou shalt lead the royal line in the kingdom of Deira?" scoffed Ulph. "Never shalt thou reign in my kingdom. Thou art no longer my son. Come, Adelwynne, let us go into the purer air and leave this sot to sleep off his wine.

"The crown shall be thine, my daughter," he continued, as they walked away.

"Not so, lord," returned the maiden, "for thou hast yet two sons who will, ere long, return to the palace. One of these will assuredly prove himself fitted to wear the crown. Torfrid is due to-day, back from his hunting, and Edmund, who has been warring in the north has sent messages ahead to say he draws near home. Let us wait for their return."

"I have little faith in my sons," retorted



Ulph, "but I will bear me in patience till they return, and then choose my heir."

The sound of a horn was heard, and ere long two companies, with men and banners, approached the castle walls. Ulph hurried his little charge to a sheltered corner where they might observe what took place, and to witness the entry of the brothers to the castle.

It was soon seen that a quarrel was in progress, and as the companies neared the gate the brothers called a halt.

Above the gate, hidden from view, the king and Adelwynne heard what ensued. Truly, there was a bitter quarrel raging, and harsh words were passed in ever rising tones between the brothers.

Torfrid was raging and shouting, while Edmund was speaking more quietly though with a deeper cunning and bitterness. They were quarrelling about a lady they had both seen, and with whom they had both fallen in love. Torfrid claimed that he had become betrothed to her ere he left the northern land where was her home. Edmund laughed and said that he had left men in her home to guard her and to watch the family treasures too.

"I care not for the treasure, but give me my bride," shouted Torfrid.

Edmund laughed in his face, and told him to go hunting and forget about one who could never be his.

"Wait until father dies," retorted his brother. "Then I will descend with my army on thee and thy princess. I will slay thee with my own hands, harry thy kingdom, and drive the lady to her knees to beg for mercy. Then shall she be mine at last."

Above the gate, Ulph turned sadly to Adelwynne and shook his head.

"I once had a son, dear girl," he moaned, "but he, brave Adelbert, lies dead, and in an honoured grave. I have no other child but thee, for these two are no longer of my flesh and blood. Kerdic is but a wine-wit, Torfrid a would-be murderer of his own brother, while Edmund, cunning and sly, is but an arrant coward. Dear child, to thee shall go my title and my lands. Thou shalt be queen of Deira when I am called to rest. Thou shalt wed thy cousin Edwy, who is brave and manly. Together shall ye rule, but thou shalt be the chief, the Queen of my province."

"Not so, dear lord," begged the girl, with tears of gratitude in her eyes.

"Thou shalt be Queen of Deira." cried

Ulph, raising his right hand above his head. "By Woden do I swear it!"

"What have we to do with Woden?" pleaded Adelwynne, taking the king's other hand in hers. "Thy eldest son is dead, and thy living sons are unworthy. Yet there is a worthy heir."

"And who may it be, if not thy dear, sweet self?" asked the king.

"The Lord Christ," exclaimed Adelwynne, her face suffused with a radiant smile. "Give thy lands to Christ, and let His Holy Church guard thy province and thy people. Naught shall harm thy subjects then, and thy soul shall rest in peace."

"Adelwynne, my child," replied the king, brokenly, "thou art better than a son to me. It shall be as thou sayest. The kingdom shall belong to God."

Taking his largest drinking-horn, the king ordered that it be filled to the brim with wine and carried into the Church of York. Then he followed quickly, and, marching boldly to the steps of the altar, took the horn in both hands as he knelt in reverence. Lifting the horn he drained it at a draught and laid it empty on the altar.

"Be this the token that I give my lands to

Christ and my people to the care of His Holy Church," he cried.

A ballad which has been written of this event closes the story thus: Said Ulph to the priest:—

“Keep my horn, O holy father; so, from  
age to age be known,  
Power is a trust from heaven; kings have  
nothing of their own;  
Never shall a son unworthy sit upon my  
father's throne!”

So the horn passed into the keeping of the Minster, and the lands of Ulph passed at his death into the ownership of the Church. Thus were foolish men and unworthy sons fitly punished for their sins, and the king was at last at peace with the world.

# THE GOLDEN BALL

HILDA A. E. ROBERTS

**G**IRALDUS CAMBRENSIS, a Welsh priest, who lived in Wales during the twelfth century, wrote in Latin the following story of a little boy whom he called Eliodorus. The Welsh form of the name was probably Elidyr, and that is what he shall be called here.

Elidyr was about ten years of age and he was most unhappy. The reason was that his father, wishing him to become a priest and a scholar, had sent Elidyr to a teacher to learn how to read and write.

But the little boy found his lessons so difficult and his teacher so harsh and unkind, that each day he shed bitter tears. At last he made up his mind to run away from home, in order to escape from the hated lessons.

So away he ran, one day, over the side of a high mountain until, at last, he came to the bank of a little rivulet.

There he hid himself in a little hollow, and for two days, and two nights he did not move

for fear of being seen. He had no food to eat except a few wild berries which he found growing on a bush. He felt very hungry, but even hunger did not drive him back to his hated tasks.

Suddenly two little men appeared before him. They seemed to be sorry for the sad little boy for they whispered to each other for a moment and then said:—

“Will you come with us? We will take you to a most beautiful land of many delights where you will be able to play all kinds of games.”

Elidyr was pleased. He jumped to his feet and followed the two little men. Along an underground path they led him and soon he found himself in a strange but very beautiful land.

All round about him was a kind of misty, grey light. It was not very dark, neither was it very bright. Although no moon shone overhead, nor yet the stars, he was able to see plainly.

He soon came to a kind of a court where he was brought before a very grand man, whom he took to be the King.

The King looked closely at him and asked him many questions. Then he said:—

"You are about the same age as my own son. Would you like to stay with us and be a companion to him?"

Elidyr thanked the King for his kind offer and said that he would stay. The strange thing about all this was, that though the King and his little people seemed to speak in a language more like Greek than Welsh, Elidyr was quite able to understand them.

Here, in the beautiful underground realm, Elidyr stayed for some time. Many new games he played with his newly-found friends. He had the same food given to him as the little prince ate, which consisted mainly of milk, made into a kind of "stirabout," flavoured with crêcuses. Neither meat nor fish nor fowls were eaten, for the little people did not kill.

At last Elidyr began to long to see his mother again, so he asked the King to let him go.

One night, permission having been granted, he returned home. His mother was overjoyed to see him. He told her of all the wonderful sights he had seen in the underground realm, and of the great wealth of the King and his court.

"Why, mother!" he said, "they even eat

off gold plates and drink from gold cups. The little prince has balls of pure gold to play with in his games."

Now Elidyr's mother was a greedy woman. "If they have so much gold, then," she said, "surely a little bit would not be missed. I would like to have some, myself. You go back and fetch me some."

At first Elidyr said, "No! To steal from those who have been kind to me, would not be right at all."

"But if they have so much, they would never miss it."

Alas! Elidyr, urged on by his greedy mother, returned to the land of the fairies. Then, when he thought no one would be looking, he crept away secretly, taking one of the Prince's golden balls with him. He felt ashamed but he comforted himself by his mother's words, that a little from their great store would not be missed.

Along the underground passage he crept and just as he was near his mother's house, he stumbled and fell. The golden ball rolled out of his hand.

He turned round quickly to pick it up, but behind him he saw two of the tiny men who had followed him all the way!



They seemed utterly disgusted with him. They took away the golden ball and told him that he ought to be ashamed of himself.

"We treated you well and took you to live with us when you were unhappy," they said. "We even allowed you to play with our own King's son. You are most ungrateful and we never wish to have anything more to do with you. You are banished from our kingdom for ever!"

So saying, the tiny men departed, taking with them the prince's golden ball.

Elidyr returned to his mother, in tears. He told her all that had happened. Many times afterwards did the lad try to find the way to the underground passage. He wandered about on the banks of the rivulet but never again could he find the opening, neither did he see again any of the tiny folk.

He began, then, to apply himself to his studies, and in due course, he became a priest.

Years afterwards when he was an old man he used to tell this story to the Bishop of St. David's. But always when he told it, he shed tears of repentance.

